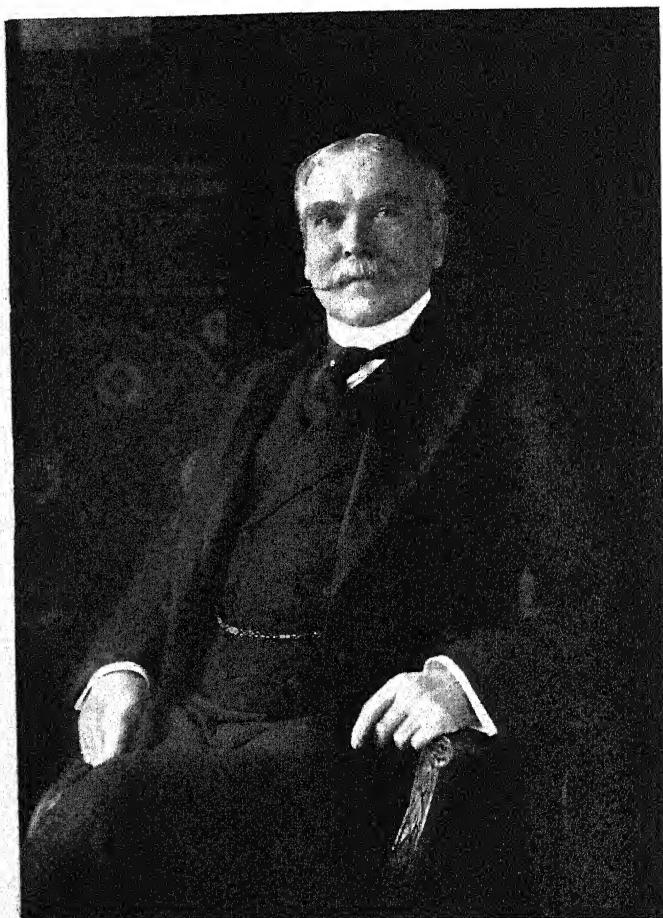


SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER





*Edwards & Fry, Photo*

*Walter L. Colls, Ph. Sc.*

*Sir William Wilson Hunter, K.C.S.I.*  
*Act. 59.*



*From the Author.*

LIFE OF SIR WILLIAM WILSON  
HUNTER, K.C.S.I., M.A., LL.D., a Vice-  
President of the Royal Asiatic Society, etc.

BY

FRANCIS HENRY SKRINE, F.S.S.

LATE H.M. INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE  
AUTHOR OF "AN INDIAN JOURNALIST," AND JOINT-AUTHOR OF  
"THE HEART OF ASIA," ETC.



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TO  
LADY HUNTER

THIS ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE A LIFE  
WHICH SHE BRIGHTENED  
AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN WHICH SHE SHARED  
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

Bound for Mrs. Hunter. Book is bound in 1821.

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## INTRODUCTION

HISTORY tells us that Prince Eugene advised an Emperor of Germany who was planning a war of aggression to pause and ask himself, What do I want? and What can I do? The great soldier's note of warning applies with equal force to biographers. They will, perhaps, find a ready answer to the first question: their wish it must be to trace the influence of atavism and environment on a hero's character, and give so truthful a presentment of his thoughts and deeds that those who know him not in the flesh shall regard him as a friend. The reply to the second query must depend on the writer's means. The best memoirs have been the work of men who laid a solid foundation during their subject's lifetime, and recorded his conversation as it flowed from his lips. It is given to few to realise this ideal, and I, alas! am not amongst them. My friendship with Sir William Hunter was of twenty years' standing, but our spheres of duty lay far apart, and I was privileged to meet him face to face but seldom. The alternative is an attempt to reconstruct a vanished existence from letters. The most satisfactory works of this class were produced during the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth centuries—leisurely times, when Europe had emerged from the squalor of the Dark Ages, and had not entered on an era of unrest and struggle, of telegrams and cheap postage. I am fortunate in having secured conditions which are rarely seen in these latter days. Copies of all important letters written or received by Sir William Hunter have been treasured up by his widow, and in writing his life I have been able to make extensive use of his own inimitable words. The story is, indeed, well worth the telling. It is that of one who, without the adventitious aids of birth or fortune, attained the highest eminence in a society which is still dominated by semi-feudal conceptions of caste and



privilege. It proves that a man may compass great things in spite of constant ill-health, of poignant sorrows, of the jealousy and intrigues of rivals; and may retain to the end a truly Christian charity—an infinite toleration of the faults and failings of others.

Sir William Hunter's career exhibited three well-defined phases. The first was one of preparation for the stern business of life. We see in him the best characteristics of the Scottish character, developed to their utmost limits by the splendid training afforded by a Northern University. The next era embraced a quarter of a century's work in the Indian Civil Service, which he entered with the highest honour by the strait gate of open competition. Hardly had it begun ere the East threw its glamour over him, and he formed the life-long resolve to interpret India to his fellow-countrymen at home. Its first fruits were the "Annals of Rural Bengal," which placed him at twenty-eight in the foremost rank of English literature. Then came the opportunity without which the highest qualities are of no avail. The Earl of Mayo, a Viceroy whose tragic death had far-reaching consequences to the Empire, divined the brilliant gifts of the young Scotsman, and put him at the head of a great Department which gave them the fullest scope. The germ contained in the "Annals" thus produced a "Doomsday Book" for Bengal, and ultimately a Gazetteer which surveyed the history and resources of an Empire as large and populous as the whole continent of Europe, Russia alone excepted.

The third stage in Sir William Hunter's strenuous life included thirteen years spent in England after the close of his service under Government. It was even richer in varied performance than the preceding period. He was a born journalist, possessing the instinctive knowledge of the requirements of the reading public and how to meet them, which brings success in the most arduous of callings. His connection with the Fourth Estate dates back to 1864, and continued almost unbroken until his last brief illness. On returning to Europe, he joined the staff of *The Times*, and his weekly articles on Indian affairs have left an enduring mark on the history of our great dependency. He wrote and edited histories and biographies almost



without number, imparting to each some measure of his own ardent personality. These years, too, gave birth to a few charming idylls, the outcome of a strain of poetry and creative power which was overlaid, so to speak, by severer studies. Then was commenced the "History of British India," which he fondly hoped would set a seal to his literary fame. This ambition was defeated by death, but the instalment which he was able to give the world has worked a revolution in all existing theories as to the rise of our dominion in the East.

His conduct as an administrator was less conspicuous only because he had fewer opportunities of showing his mettle. As Director-General of Statistics, and afterwards President of a Commission for recasting the educational system of India, his success was undeniable. The complicated arrangements for producing the "Statistical Account of Bengal," the "Imperial Gazetteer," and an entire library of other works, were carried through by him without a hitch or a lawsuit, and he had a faculty which is displayed only by born leaders of mankind. Rarely indeed was his judgment at fault in the selection of agents to assist him in his undertakings. Every collaborator became a friend for life, and gained a share of his burning enthusiasm.

Will his works live? It is, perhaps, too soon to give a decided answer. He does not belong to the little knot of solitary teachers whose genius divines the occult workings of Nature's laws and the trend of human institutions. We find in his utterances no trace of "the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilised world with the decline of belief in a beneficent Power." His, rather, was the robust optimism of Macaulay, a writer whose style had some effect in moulding Sir William Hunter's. In all essentials he belonged to the Victorian era, and gloried in the outward and visible signs of the Empire's might, the boundless possibilities of human enterprise. Again, the great bulk of his work belongs to the "Literature of Knowledge," and such books are doomed to be superseded sooner or later by others, built on their foundations and embodying the results of later research. But I venture to predict that posterity will cherish "The Annals of Rural Bengal," the Lives of Mayo and Dalhousie, "The Old



Missionary," "The Thackerays in India," and that noble fragment, "The History of British India." They display a command of pathos, a power of resuscitating a dead and buried past, which the author had in common with the great masters of our "Literature of Power," and with them alone.

In forming an estimate of Sir William Hunter's character as a man we stand on firmer ground. Its most salient feature was an intense love of the family and the home. He requited the heart-whole devotion of his wife with ardent affection; he was his children's companion and friend. But his sympathies were not restricted to the little realm which he ruled so gently. He had a rare power of making and keeping friends of every degree, who were not forgotten in the whirl of affairs and amid the distinctions won by his intellectual prowess. Nay, those who had no such claims upon him did not appeal in vain for counsel or material help. No one enjoyed the beauties of this glorious world more thoroughly than he, but his chief happiness lay in soothing the pain of others and adding to their joys.

His life was not without its shadows. It was chequered by many sorrows and bereavements, and I doubt whether he had a week's unbroken health throughout its course. It is beyond question that his days were shortened by the excessive strain placed upon a constitution which was never very vigorous. His tireless energy prompted him to embark on a multiplicity of enterprises, and to carry them through with a perseverance which knew no rest or respite, and finally exhausted his great reserve of nervous strength. This book points a moral which should be laid to heart by those who are tempted to forget that human powers are finite, and that the day has but a given number of working hours.

An adequate description of a life so full and varied demands qualities as brilliant as Sir William Hunter's. If I be held to have not wholly failed in my attempt to depict a many-sided character, the credit is due to those who have given me ready and effectual help. Lady Hunter was her husband's friend and counsellor; indeed, it was only after she had honoured me by entrusting this task to my hands that I discovered how greatly she had contributed to his achievements. She has been my fellow-worker in the fullest sense of the word. To the Wilson



family of Hawick, which was Sir William Hunter's by maternal descent, to Miss D. Caird, Miss Gurney Dimsdale of York, and the authorities of Glasgow University, I am indebted for priceless information of his early life. Amongst many of his friends who have kindly permitted me to use their letters and aided in the work of revision, I would mention Sir George Birdwood, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, the Earl of Northbrook, Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, Lady Pontifex, General Sir Owen Burne, Sir John Strachey, Sir Richard Temple, Raja Peary Mohun Mukharji of Uttarpara, Dr. R. Needham Cust, Messrs. B. M. Malabari, A. D. Lancaster, J. A. R. Marriott, R. Vary Campbell, and W. H. Verner. My chief difficulty has been one of selection, and in grappling with it I have not been unmindful of the Voltairean maxim, *On doit aux vivans des égards ; on ne doit aux morts que la vérité.*

F. H. SKRINE.

OXFORD,

*The 26th October 1901.*







# SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER was born in a class which has played a great part in the evolution of our national life. In mediæval times it was a bulwark against feudal aggression; in the seventeenth century it won our political liberties with the sword. Its energy and enterprise have given us an empire in the East and colonies in every quarter of the globe. Great Britain owes her middle class a debt which history will assuredly acknowledge. His father, Mr. Andrew Galloway Hunter, was the son of an Ayrshire schoolmaster. He was a man of great versatility, eager to undertake and tenacious in execution. Profoundly versed in chemistry, he was the author of several articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" on that abstruse subject. But the circumstances of his early life forced him into a calling which demanded humbler faculties. He served an apprenticeship to the woollen trade, devoting himself especially to the manufacture of felt and beaver hats, and founded a flourishing business in Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Hunter was always at heart a chemist. We shall find him again and again risking his fortune in the manufacture of alkali on a large scale. We shall see him undaunted under the severest strokes of fortune, and ceasing from the struggle only when old age and blindness rendered further efforts

<sup>1</sup> Mr. James Coutts of the Glasgow University has kindly searched the Directories of that city for information on Mr. Andrew Galloway Hunter's business career. Between 1856 and 1859 the latter is regarded as "of A. G. Hunter & Co., Hat and Forage Cap Manufacturers to the Queen, Prince Consort, and Royal Family." His name disappears from the Directory in 1860, when his interest in the firm ceased.



nugatory. He had considerable culture, with a command of the purest English diction, and was a practised logician. "Manners," said Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, first Bishop of Calcutta, "are everything with most people, and something with every one." If Mr. Hunter left no mark behind him commensurate with his ability, the cause of his failure lay on the surface. His manner was pompous and wanting in sincerity; and he was addicted to making set speeches and proposing toasts in the quaint and rather irritating fashion familiar to readers of Charles Dickens, the Shakespeare of the early Victorian era. At home his narrow religious principles and a proneness to autocratic methods compelled his children's respect, but he never had had their love.

In 1837 he married Isabella Wilson, a scion of a singularly able and successful family settled at Hawick in Roxburghshire. Her father, William Wilson, came of a line of substantial farmers near Bransholme. During an apprenticeship in the woollen trade he observed that the existing practice of employing home-spun yarn on the stocking-frame rendered it impossible to turn out goods of an even texture. As soon as he became his own master he superseded the spinning-wheel, so familiar in eighteenth-century engravings, by a factory fitted with machinery of the latest type.<sup>1</sup> In 1800 he took to himself an associate in the person of Mr. William Watson, and the pair prospered amazingly, their woollen goods becoming well known throughout Scotland and the English northern counties. The firm of Wilson & Watson was dissolved in 1818, and the junior partner founded the flourishing business still carried on by Messrs. Tait & Watson at the Merrilees Works near Glasgow.<sup>2</sup> Mr. William Wilson's descendants spread into many branches, united by the closest bonds of affection; and it is, in the main, to their enterprise that Hawick owes its growth within the limits of a lifetime from an agricultural village to a great centre of industry. There is no doubt that Hunter derived from his Wilson blood the keenly practical side of his character and the tact which he brought to bear on

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the author from Mr. Charles John Wilson of Hawick, dated September 30, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> His son, Sir Renny Watson, died April 17, 1900.



complex affairs. It is equally clear that the strong current of family life seen at Hawick, the solid luxury in which his cousins lived, had their effect in shaping his later career.

But all the Hawick Wilsons were not content with the surroundings of a wealthy manufacturer. The rare mental gifts of Mr. William Wilson's third son, afterwards the Right Honourable James Wilson, found scope in the realms of political economy and finance. He became a moving spirit in the Anti-Corn Law agitation, which shook the United Kingdom sixty years ago, and founded the *Economist*, still the leading monetary organ of London. Entering Parliament, he became successively Secretary to the Board of Control, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Paymaster-General. The highest distinctions which English politics afford lay within his grasp, but he reluctantly abandoned these brilliant prospects at the entreaty of the Premier, Lord Palmerston, who saw in him the only man who could restore equilibrium to the Indian exchequer after the mutiny of 1857.<sup>1</sup> He went out to Calcutta in 1859, as the first of the Viceroy's Financial Members of Council, and died in less than a year at the age of fifty-five, spent with toil in an uncongenial climate, leaving an enduring mark on the monetary system of our Eastern Empire. Hunter early took to heart the lesson taught by his uncle's strenuous life, and indeed there was much in common between these distinguished kinsmen. The "Dictionary of National Biography" tells us that Mr. James Wilson was "very active in temperament, fertile in ideas, lucid in exposition. To the last hour of his life he was of a sanguine disposition. His memory was marvellous, his judgment remarkably keen. In society his vivacity of conversation was remarkable."

The great man's sister, Isabella Wilson, was born in 1800, and was educated at Ackworth, a noted seminary of the

<sup>1</sup> When her late Majesty was told by Lord Palmerston that Mr. James Wilson was the only man who could retrieve the shattered finances of India, she asked, "But what will become of the *Economist*?" Unlike her predecessor, Queen Victoria kept herself well posted in the commercial doings of her reign. An ideal editor was found in Mr. Wilson's son-in-law, the late Mr. Walter Bagehot.



Quakers, which sect her parents had joined.<sup>1</sup> That she possessed a masterful intellect is rendered clear by her portrait, which reveals a noble brow and well-cut features. Those who knew her in later life were impressed by her stately mien and coronet of snow-white locks, and recognised that she had a full measure of the old-world courtesy, the culture, and the high sense of duty which shine so brightly in the followers of William Penn. Finding the home life at Hawick too narrow a sphere for her energies, she accepted the post of governess in the Dimsdale family at York. Here she lived, "beloved and esteemed as an elder sister," till her father's declining health recalled her to his side.<sup>2</sup> Marrying, as she did, comparatively late in life she was inclined to rate duty and principle above maternal tenderness, but her keen interest in her boys' education extended far beyond the period at which a mother generally abandons the helm. She learnt both Greek and Latin in order to help them in their studies, and when they grew up they remembered with gratitude her example of strenuous and systematic work.

Three sons were born to Mr. Andrew Hunter and his clever wife, of whom the future historian of India was the second, coming into the world at Glasgow on the 15th July 1840.<sup>3</sup> His childhood was spent at Cross Bank, an old-fashioned house which stood back from the Great Western Road, on the site now occupied by Windsor Hall. He rarely alluded to this period, and when he did, it was with something of resentment. In nothing has the advance in civilisation been more marked than in the treatment of the young. Sir William Hunter was one of the earliest exponents of the doctrine of love as an educative influence. "We owe a heavy debt to our children," he used to say, "in that we have brought them into the world without their consent. Half the wretchedness in the nursery and the schoolroom arises from parents' disposition to lay down a rigid code of laws and punish infractions with exasperating

<sup>1</sup> She is recorded on the Ackworth register as No. 3203; entering the school in 1810, and leaving it in 1814.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the author from Mrs. Elizabeth Gurney Dimsdale of York, dated September 19, 1900.

<sup>3</sup> His brothers were Andrew George, born in 1838, and John James, in 1841.



severity. Let us make as few regulations as possible, and enforce obedience only by loving monition. Our little ones should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, with the fullest scope for the development of that individuality which is every human being's birthright. All possible means should be taken to smooth their entry on active life, but they can hardly learn too soon the lesson that the future is in their hands, and success depends on their own exertions." These admirable principles governed Hunter's attitude towards his own children, and it was evident to all that knew him that they were inspired by his experiences at Cross Bank. But his parents are hardly open to blame for adopting a system of repression which told with tenfold force on his sensitive and highly nervous temperament. In his generation one's elders were apt to elevate themselves on pedestals and to check youthful cravings for sympathy. Many a bright intellect has been stunted by this baneful method. It speaks volumes for Hunter's native strength of character that his gloomy childhood should have inspired him only with a deep affection for the weak and helpless.

His nurse, Belle MacArthur by name, was an excellent specimen of the old Scottish servant. Faithful and fully deserving the implicit trust placed in her, she was dour and intolerant of boyish freaks and fancies. Little Willie was excitable and restless, and he chafed under her uncompromising regimen. With Belle he was a favourite, but to her dying day she spoke of him as "That warstling Wullie." His indomitable perseverance was exhibited at the age of five. He had been allotted a tiny patch in the Cross Bank garden as his own domain, but alas! the ground was too stony to grow aught save docks and thistles. Nothing daunted, he set to work with his toy wheel-barrow, and laboured for several hours daily in bringing fresh earth from a distance. These manœuvres excited the family derision, and the spot was known as "Willie's grave." But the laugh was on his side when his flower-seeds, deposited in the renewed soil, came up and filled the whole garden with radiance and perfume. Soon afterwards he met with an accident which left a lasting mark. A pet goat, to which he was devotedly attached, gored him in the



left eye, tearing the lid severely and injuring the optic nerve. For a long time his sight was despaired of, and ever afterwards he suffered from neuralgia in the injured organ, which recurred with clockwork regularity, and caused him unspeakable torment. Another mishap which befell him a few years later had an equally sinister effect on his physique. He was thrown from his pony and broke the left fore-arm. The fracture was unskilfully set by the surgeon called in, and his parents, finding that the arm did not recover its flexibility, took the child to a Glasgow specialist. The latter saw that no time was to be lost. He broke and reset the limb, but Hunter never regained its entire use. He afterwards became an accomplished horseman, but was handicapped by the fact that he was unable to extend the bridle-arm.

His school life began in 1854, when he was sent to Queenwood, near Stockbridge, in Hampshire. The outward appearance of this famous Quaker seminary is faithfully rendered by a drawing by Hunter still extant. It shows a huge edifice with stumpy, pagoda-like towers and a clumsy dormer roof, and redeemed from ugliness only by the order and beauty of the surrounding gardens.

So sound had been Hunter's home-training that he was enrolled on entering in the second class, taking a place above much older lads. This he maintained by never-failing attention to his studies. The stiffness in his arm prevented him from attaining prominence in games, and indeed his interest centred in literature. It was a custom at Queenwood that the pupils "should earn a holiday," as the phrase went, on Fridays and Saturdays by gaining a required minimum of marks throughout the week. This privilege was often won by Hunter, and it was devoted to long rambles, which sometimes lasted till Saturday night. Thus he explored Salisbury Plain, Savernake Forest, and the many marvels of the West. His enjoyment of Nature's works and the triumph of human skill was always enhanced by ponderings on some favourite author. To this day pencilled notes in his well-thumbed Shakespeare and Milton record the fact that passages of striking beauty were read under the shadow of mysterious Stonehenge or in view of Sarum's cloud-piercing spire. The



summer vacations were spent with his parents in cottages which they took at Port Bannatyne, near Rothesay, and at Rahane on the Gairloch. Miss Margaret Watson, granddaughter of William Watson, and her sister, afterwards Mrs. Shelley, were his playmates at the seaside. Both recall his unselfishness, his anxiety to protect them and to spare them all trouble. Such association between lads and lasses is by no means so common in England as across the Border and in the United States, a fact to be regretted, for its influence on both sexes is generally good and lasting.

Thus did Hunter learn consideration for the weak, a chivalrous regard for women, and a predilection for their society, which he retained in after life; he early lost the uncouth manners which make a man's green-salad days a period of purgatory, and acquired the old-fashioned courtesy which was one of the many charms of his fascinating personality. From his girl playmates, too, he picked up the habit of observing intricacies of female dress, generally a sealed book for the sterner sex. His abhorrence for black attire was, perhaps, an inheritance from his mother, for the Friends eschew mourning. Their distinctive dress, now rapidly becoming a thing of the past, never displays flaunting colours, but its material is as rich as the wearer's means can afford. The profane are, perhaps, unaware that the goddess of Fashion holds sway over the fair Quaker's toilette, which is subject to as many changes as the most brilliant creations of Worth or Paquin. While the family were at church one Sunday at Port Bannatyne, a sudden storm of wind and rain beat fiercely against the windows. Little Willie saw with deep distress that his mother was wearing a new white satin bonnet and had no umbrella. So he slipped out and ran home, a distance of two miles, to fetch that most necessary companion on the rainy West coast.

In spite of the delicacy left by his injured arm, he was most venturesome, and full of schemes for employing the hours of play. Passionately fond of the sea and its surroundings, he was never happier than when skimming the waves of Bannatyne Bay in a pleasure boat. In one of these trips the children forgot to stop the "bung hole," as it is called in Scotland.



The water poured in, and the little crew were within an ace of drowning, when Willie, who never lost his head in times of peril, managed to replace the missing plug. His love of adventure was again displayed in excursions over hill and dale, which were often prolonged for several days. He was content to pass the night at wayside inns and in shepherds' huts, and when such meagre shelter was not forthcoming, he found warmth by creeping into a haystack. On one occasion he was awakened at grey dawn by an inquisitive Highland bullock thrusting his shaggy poll into the snug retreat. Thus he explored the whole west coast of Scotland, and could have written a guide-book to the maze of loch and mountain range exhibited by Argyllshire. His only companion on these trips was some much-loved volume. History was always an absorbing study; and so ambitious was he, so devoted to his lessons, that he seemed to grudge his holidays, in despite of the joys of freedom and the exhilaration of keen mountain air.

After a profitable year at Queenwood, Hunter joined the Glasgow Academy with his younger brother, John James. Here he associated but little with his schoolfellows. Great mental power is essentially lonely, and becomes expansive only on the rare occasions when it meets with congenial natures. Schopenhauer says truly that "the more a man has in himself the less he needs of others and the less they can teach him. Such supremacy leads to unsociableness. The brainless will have companionship and pastimes at any price." Hunter's innate modesty led him to ascribe this aloofness of his early youth to the peculiarity of his training. "If ever a man had a lonely education," he told his *fiancée* a few years later, "I had; and the consequence is that I am more at home in solitude than with men of my own age. Solitude may turn a man into a rhymers or a tale-writer, but it seldom rears him up a healthy-minded, agreeable fellow." This shyness, which speedily disappeared when he came into contact with the world, was unattended by a particle of self-conceit. No lad was ever more free from the spirit of the prig, which is generally a mute assertion of superior intellectual gifts. From this detestable quality he was preserved by a sense of humour and an intense love of fun, which kept him young to the very last. His



watchword, while still in childhood, was *ἀλὲν ἀπιστεύειν*. At a time when a longing for higher ideals had come to him he wrote to Miss Murray: "I now take a very different view as to the value of superiority over my fellows from those which I once entertained. It pains me to think that during my school days I continually nourished a desire to beat, in intellectual contests, every one I met. I am sure that few men are really happy and liked, or deserve to be, who cherish an ambition to be better than their equals."<sup>1</sup>

In 1855 Hunter passed from the Academy to the University of Glasgow. It had been decided that he should assist his father in the manufacture of alkali, and he plunged with characteristic zeal into practical chemistry. Professor Thomas Candlish testified to his pupil's having "devoted himself with great assiduity to the course of study, and performed a considerable number of difficult analyses with success."<sup>2</sup> During the next session he gained the first prize for exercises in chemistry performed at home. But inherited aptitudes led him to prefer the severe training of the logician. He became a favourite scholar of Robert Buchanan, a man worthy to rank with the fathers of Scottish philosophy.<sup>3</sup> The venerable professor showed an enthusiastic appreciation of his merits, certifying that he was "punctual, diligent, had made distinguished progress in logic, and one of the most honourable prizes in the Division had been adjudged to him, and him alone."<sup>4</sup> In the session 1857-58 Hunter joined the junior Latin class, then under Professor Ramsay, gaining the fourth prize, with an encomium from his teacher, who has left on record the fact that he was a "most zealous and highly able student, and acquitted himself at all times with great credit."<sup>5</sup> Greek was attacked in the following year, and here again he was a prizeman, Professor E. S. Lushington bearing evidence

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Miss Murray (afterwards Lady Hunter) of December 22, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of June 1, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Buchanan, to whose teaching Hunter was deeply indebted, was born in 1785, and educated for the ministry. He held the chair in Logic at Glasgow for forty years, and was also a poet and dramatist of some note in his day. He died in 1873, leaving his savings to found a bursary in Arts and Letters.

<sup>4</sup> Certificate dated May 1, 1857.

<sup>5</sup> Certificate dated April 30, 1857.



that he was a "most excellent student."<sup>1</sup> His last session at the University was that of 1859-60. It was devoted to the study of Mathematics and the higher branches of Moral Philosophy and Ethics. He usually contented himself with one class in each term, and numerous prizes showed that his work was directed by energy and method. More conclusive evidence of the early maturity of his powers is afforded by the college exercises which have survived shipwreck and the yet more destructive attacks of the Indian white ant. One sees in these *juvenilia* something more than the germs of the faculty of marshalling complex facts, the mastery over words which are essentials in the historian's equipment. They reveal, too, a strain of original thought, and give the brightest augury of future achievement in the world of letters.

In 1856 we find him composing an oration on the once famous *Lorcha Arrow* incident, which involved us in hostilities with China and was within an ace of upsetting the Administration of Lord Palmerston. The young speaker's inborn sense of justice rose in revolt against the overbearing conduct of our plenipotentiary, Sir John Bowring.<sup>2</sup> "We are told," he exclaims, "that the Chinese are barbarians, and not, therefore, entitled to the privileges of a civilised country. But the Chinese are men, and I contend that every man and every nation have a right to participate in the justice which is due to each member of our race." This sentiment has a direct bearing on our relations with the Celestial Empire in 1901, just as an inevitable phase of the South African War seems to be foreshadowed in a thesis handed in by Hunter in 1857. In affirming that peace between the Great Powers could not be preserved until the close of the nineteenth century, he offered some striking remarks on the trail left behind it by the then recent Crimean War.

<sup>1</sup> Certificate dated April 10, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Bowring's selfish, intriguing nature advanced him to notoriety and fortune. He was an Imperialist born out of due time, a blatant champion of the *Civis Britannus* doctrine. In 1856, while in charge of our interests in China, he took upon himself to declare war with China in revenge for the seizure of a piratical junk known as the *Arrow*, which flew the Union Jack without the smallest right to do so. His action was fiercely attacked in Parliament by Cobden, and as strenuously upheld by Palmerston. An appeal to the country led to a hearty endorsement of the latter's policy. History has repeated itself in 1900.



It has taken steady, sober civilians from the plough, the factory, and the workshop. It has accustomed them to a desultory life, and given them notions of dignity and importance as injurious as they are fictitious. It has destroyed their morality, made vice delightful and virtue contemptible in their eyes. It has imbued their minds with a dislike, and utterly incapacitated them for the sustained labour of ordinary life. It has cast them back upon their country, shipwrecked for life. Looking back on the jollities of camp life and campaigning, they forget the toils and dangers undergone, and tell tales of battles in such a manner as to awaken the interest and delight of their hearers. It is this that not only vitiates a country at the close of every war, but predisposes it for another by creating a thirst for new bloodshed, new adventures, and future glory.

The development of a genius may be followed yet more closely in a commonplace book which Hunter kept throughout 1859-60, years to him of enchantment, when the young man rejoiced in his strength, and sorrows and disillusion, which must darken every life, were still beyond the range of his mental vision. It is entitled "*Observations of Human Nature*," and fills 413 closely written quarto pages. These notes were generally suggested by his reading, but they often recorded the thoughts which floated in his impressionable brain after some unusual excitement. He would return at an early hour to his chambers at 102 Bath Street, after a dance or a supper-party of congenial spirits, and jot down some terse apothegm, some original idea before going to bed. The sonorous diatribes of Juvenal affected him deeply, though he acutely remarks that the prince of satirists was over-fond of hearing the crack of his own whip. Cicero and Tacitus were also great favourites, and a diligent study of their rhythmic periods had its effect on the formation of his own style. But he always attached greater importance to the essence than the form of history. Many pages of the "*Observations*" are devoted to analyses of the civilisation of ancient Rome, and the causes which led to her downfall. Greek quotations occur here and there, but Hunter never delved deeply into Hellenic literature. With that of his own country he was well acquainted. Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Byron, and especially Johnson and Goldsmith, were his idols. He lingers fondly over various episodes in the brilliant Irishman's too brief and



troubled career. An eloquent passage, which a note by the young writer tells us was "thought of before I was sixteen," shows that it excited his warmest sympathy:—

Yes, true-hearted, great-hearted Goldsmith! would to God you could rise from your narrow bed in the Temple Church-yard and hear the epithets which the nineteenth century applies to you. No more 'poor little Goldy,' but 'dear and noble Oliver.' No more the miseries of a pale-faced, pock-marked boyhood for your bursting heart; no more distress and pinchings, degradations and injuries for your gentle spirit; no more ingratitude and the cold loneliness of your garret for your tender soul; but fame and admiration and thanks from a Goethe and the master-minds of the world, and blessings from the lowly ones who have been made more tender and pure by you. Yes, dear Goldsmith, God has taken to Himself again the pale, pock-marked face, there to meet once more with the nobler part that has gone before. Oh, these are the bounties of time; this is the apotheosis of genius—for all that is good in us to dwell for ever in the hearts of our fellow-men, while our littlenesses and infirmities sink forgotten in the grave!

There is surely something prophetic in the last sentence, and indeed in the following:—

We have dug deep in the earth with sweat and toil, and implanted our own little offshoot of knowledge in the forest of human wisdom. Ever after we have watched and wept over it through our night of struggles, till it springeth up in the morning of fulfilment. Then, without looking round for praise or dispraise of our work from those around us, just to leave the little tree to God, and taking up our pilgrim staff and scrip, to journey out of the forest into the far-off land.

His generous appreciation of other men's work was evidently inspired by the example of the great souls who have gone before:—

It is a noble spectacle that of one genius paying homage to a predecessor; to hear Cicero warming into glorious eloquence at the thought of the eloquence of Demosthenes; to see how modestly Juvenal, the great master of Roman satire, "enters his chariot on the course through which the mighty son of Aurunca guided his steeds," making his obeisance to the stern old Lucilius at his first bound, as it were, from the barrier; to watch the solicitous affection and respect paid by Milton to Homer and Virgil; by Pope to Waller, Spencer, and the Italians; by Macaulay to Addison; by Byron to Pope, although, to be sure, such an obeisance is like the bowing down of a giant's spear to a fairy's needle.



Keen observation and a knowledge of human nature far above the writer's years appear in the next passage:—

I can arrive at a pretty fair computation as to my distance from any great town by the amount of staring I am subjected to in the villages while passing. In the neighbourhood of Glasgow a drove of sheep or a cart of straw attracts infinitely more attention than you do. As you proceed countrywards, you may observe all the old ladies of the hamlet turning out to the doors, and little noses flattened against window-panes for the advancement of their owners' knowledge of the natural history of the strange creature who is passing. But when you have penetrated into the fastnesses of the Highlands, the little children creep by you in an awestruck manner, and then stop and turn round at the statutory distance behind you, and give vent to the emotions of their bosoms in a gaze.

The curs at Callander are but types of a class of men. They turn out every evening to yelp at the Trossachs coach, just as their human prototypes do at everything that is greater or swifter or finer than themselves. Growling is an original and primary faculty with some men. They seem to yelp intuitively, and we cannot help believing that their first infantile wail was a snarl. Happy are they who can dash past these human curs as swiftly and as undisturbed as do the gallant greys and their most interesting driver! The whole business in life of such hounds is to snap.

Some men toil on for the greater part of their life in gloom and obscurity, like the sun labouring up the heavens on a misty day, and then burst forth into a golden-waved sunset, streaking the horizon of old age with long, trailing clouds of glory.

Fame! Sir? Why, what is fame to a poor man but letting all Europe know that he is a beggar?

The spirit which Hunter brought to bear on his studies at the University is shown in an entry of 1859:—

I pity the lad who is too clever to work at college. I have known several such. One-third of them have turned out unpractical wits, who could dine out ten times a week (if they were allowed to eat ten dinners in seven days); another third have subsided into medium lawyers or divines; and the remaining third are geniuses. When we have the chance of being idle, ten to one we take advantage of it; and though mere cleverness and a good tutor may put a lad through the University with credit, there is no escaping work if he wants to get on in the world. Such young gentlemen have generally good abilities and a great power of concentrating work into marvellously short periods. I compare such students to Red Indians or Bedouins, who can undergo the severest toil and privation for a short time, but who spend the greater



portion of their year in immoderate slothfulness. The long and the strong pull is the type of civilisation; the short and fierce paddle, of savageness and barbarism.

This train of thought suggested Hunter's views on education :—

I remember the good impression my mind acquired from several pleasant tales in the Third Book and Course of Reading, but I cannot recollect anything about the tales themselves. On the other hand, I remember many wise apothegms and maxims which I learned at school, but do not recollect ever having derived any benefit from them.

If men were always to act in large bodies, then I think a public school and strict drilling would be the best means of educating them. But, as in the great world every man has to act for himself, I am inclined to think that the loss of individuality and personal responsibility, which being one of many, conjoined with severe discipline, give occasion to, is disproportionate to the benefits derived from habits of regularity and subservience to authority which they are intended to produce. Another disadvantage of public schools is, that one bad boy corrupts a great many. Of course this has been repeated over and over again, and has given rise to many unpleasant speculations on the comparative potency of good and evil. On this I shall not presume to enter; but let us consider for a moment. Although the physician orders cheerful society for the hypochondriac or the dyspeptic patient, no one would ever venture to assert that the influence which health exerts over disease is as great as the infection which disease, say a fever, communicates to health. Why, then, do we repine when we find a moral murrain spreading from an individual to a body? It is not a question of comparative power at all. When in a normal state, either as regards physical or moral health, we are in a state of equilibrium, and a very little force is often sufficient to overbalance us when in an abnormal state. If we have lost equilibrium and are falling headlong, should we wonder that it requires a considerable force to stop us? And the normal state of a man's soul is pure, even as that of his body is health. I do not mean to insinuate that man has not fallen. I fancy we poor degenerates can as faintly realise the glow of health which thrilled through the body of the sinless Adam as we can picture the purity which quickened his soul. By health of body and soul I mean the tolerable sanity we at present enjoy.

The seeds of a man's destiny are derived from his parents; and by the education and circumstances of his boyhood they are fostered into shrubs. In early manhood the shrub puts forth its boughs in leafy luxuriance, and derives its bend from its own thinking and conduct. In middle life the wood becomes hardened



and inflexible, and the tree must stand up to face the storms of heaven in the position which it has taken, and drop into the earth the seeds of another generation's destiny. That of the individual flows from the peculiar bias of his disposition. Let the man of a mercurial fancy and tender sentiment beware how he plans for himself twelve or twenty years of the scholar's study or the lawyer's desk! Every profession where the intellect wins a sustenance for the whole man is refining and noble, but the poetical temperament may be just as miserable and useless, because out of place, in mismanaging briefs in the Temple as in misweighing bacon over a shop counter. Riches cannot buy happiness, nor are they essential to it, but to develop to the utmost our particular capabilities and to exercise those powers which God has peculiarly blessed us with—in short, honestly to live the life which has been appointed to us, and to live through the whole range of our faculties—that is to fulfil our destiny, that is happiness.

Hunter had the precious gift of humour, a joy to its possessor and to all who are in contact with him. The ensuing extracts show that it came to him early in life.

A clever son may repair the fortunes of a falling house, a great monarch may sustain a sinking state, giants are fabled to have supported mountains, and Atlas to have borne up the world. But neither men nor giants, nor Atlas, no, nor even an angel's tongue nor a seraph's intelligence, can write up a falling newspaper.

When that naughty flirt, Mademoiselle Fortune, draws her little pink glove from your arm, makes you a mock heroic curtsey and casts a glance across the room at some more favoured swain, don't be dejected, or she will just laugh at you the more, and make fun of you to her new partner. Go, rather, and offer your arm boldly to that poor old maid Misfortune, sitting solitary at the end of the couch, whisper something gallant, and ask her to sit out the next quadrille. You will probably find the pretty little coquette before mentioned intriguing to be your *vis-à-vis*, and making you a most gracious curtsey in the third set.

Why, sir, none but a great nation can be a nation of snobs. The snobbish instinct is a phase of one of those intuitions which we have reason to thank God for. Man is an excellence-seeking animal. Let a nation once agree to set up any standard or pattern you choose, and forthwith you will see them all with bare knees and hands climbing up the long pole and catching at the ring at the top. To wear clean white robes was the height of respectability for the Jewish priesthood, and did you ever hear of a Levite appearing at the altar with ephod stained with vestry-room port? Our young friends at Heidelberg fancy that a capability for swallowing beer is the perfect ideal of the True and the Beautiful;



accordingly the corps-meeting sits tippling till our English brain is spinning. See how correctly Lutfullah and other good Mussulmans say prayers five times a day, and the indignant note with which that entertaining Mohammedan gentleman repels the insinuation of only three every twenty-four hours. Yet consider how often the poor Levite must have sold his dinner into captivity to his laundress to be able to cover his emptiness respectably: how often Max and Fritz of the Prussian Corps awake with sore, sore heads, the result of "respectable" beer-bibbing overnight: and watch how poor Lutfullah has to rub himself all over with sand, like the sparrows on the Greenwich Road, because he can't find water to purify himself respectably with before prayers.

The concluding "observations" prove that the literary instinct in Hunter was guided by broad sympathies and a warm heart.

To remember an injury is to tear open the bleeding wound afresh; to forget it is to use the cauteries of the human surgeon. But to forgive is to apply the soothing leaves which the hand from heaven presents to the Christian, and this is the wisdom of the Divine Physician.

What a heart-break it must be to a father to see all his sons going wrong one after the other! Piteous it is even to the looker-on to see the fond old man fixing the affection which has been flung back successively by the elder one on the youngest, and then, finding he has in this case also been anchoring on seaweed, finally drifting away down in sorrow and grey hairs to the grave.

Not all have trusted themselves down on the deep soundings of human experience, nor do all need the venture. While we are panting in the depths with eye-balls starting and blood oozing at every pore, some gentler souls are floating trustingly over our heads. Some pilgrims pass through the darkest waters of sorrow, nay, the Slough of Despond itself, spruce, dry, unruffled, like ducks on a mill-pond, rendered pity proof and sorrow tight by that delicate animal oil called Selfishness.

If you happen to be standing by the mantelpiece and looking down on the top of the fire, you may have observed the smoke occasionally lit up and tinged with a beautiful crimson colour by the red coals below. Well, perhaps to the angel's eyes the misery and wretchedness and despair which steam up to heaven from many a foul and loathsome alley may be also tinged with rays far brighter and more glorious than those of the setting sun by the patience, submission, and trusting faith with which the misery and wretchedness are borne.

Of Hunter's private life during his *lehr jahre* I have been able to gather but few details. He never sought popularity,



and the shyness which is generally seen in young men who have not had a public school education clung to him until it was banished by his early contact with the world of affairs. A man is proverbially known by the society which he affects, and the character of Hunter's friends at college casts some light on his own. His chambers in Bath Street were the trysting-place of a coterie of kindred spirits who sharpened their wits by contests on knotty points in literature, finance, and morals, and found solace from the labours of the class-room in indulging the quiet humour which shines so brightly in the Scottish race. Death has made grievous inroads in the little circle—indeed, there are but two survivors, Mr. R. Vary Campbell, Sheriff of Roxburgh, Berwick, and Selkirk, and Mr. John Ferguson, now Professor of Chemistry at the Glasgow University. All his friends were men of mental powers considerably above the average, and one at least possessed the divine spark of genius. This was Mr. James Barnhill, of Glasgow, whose letters show that he was a man of deep and earnest piety, a brilliant musician, and the possessor of the highest culture. But for his constant ill-health and early death the world would have heard more of poor Barnhill.<sup>1</sup> John Purves was another intimate. He was a profound Hellenist, passed from Glasgow to Balliol as a Snell Exhibitioner,<sup>2</sup> and, after a University career of distinction, settled down as an Oxford Don, and died in 1889. John Garvie Hutcheson was perhaps the closest associate of Hunter's ardent youth. He, too, was an excellent classical scholar, and his tastes were wholly academical, but circumstances forbade a professional career. He went into business, and settled at Beirut, where he married. He became well versed in Arabic, and continued to study the Oriental tongues

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Innes Addison, of the Glasgow University, has furnished me with extracts from his "Roll of Graduates, 1717-1797," and his work on the Snell Exhibitions, bearing on the lives of these early friends. James Barnhill graduated B.A. in 1860, became M.A. in 1864, and was soon afterwards appointed teacher of Classics at the Neilson Institute, Paisley. He returned to Alma Mater as Assistant Librarian, but finally adopted a mercantile career, and died in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> These Exhibitions enable Glasgow graduates to continue their studies at Balliol. It was probably this connection between Glasgow and Oxford that suggested Hunter's choice of a College when he settled at the latter University. He used to say that an ideal education would be one beginning at an English public school, continued at Glasgow or Edinburgh University, and completed at one of their English sisters.



after his return to Scotland, where he died in 1870, lamented by a host of friends. We obtain a charming glimpse of Hunter, as his Glasgow comrades saw him, in a memorandum drawn up by one of those who knew him long ere fame had dawned on him.

It is a far look back to the class-room and quadrangle of the old University, and to a session there in the fifties, but even now I see the sunny face and the alert figure of Gulielmus Hunter as the censor, morning by morning, called out his name. It was the logic class-room, and the young fellow, who even then gave promise of what was to come, was a favourite of Professor Buchanan—"Logic Bob," as the students affectionately styled him. When a question was put, Hunter's answer was always ready, but not more so than the Professor's well-pleased recognition, "Very good, Mr. Hunter, very good." He had, I well remember, a fine ambition and briskness, and we all knew that he would stand well when the prize day came.<sup>1</sup>

Another class-fellow writes:—

His most distinctive trait was his knowledge of the world, and of the means of advancement in a wider sphere than Scotland or a Scotch College afforded. He dabbled a little in verse, and undoubtedly had what I call the bardic or literary gift in a marked degree. He could make "copy" of anything, and did so with appalling industry and cultivated method.<sup>2</sup>

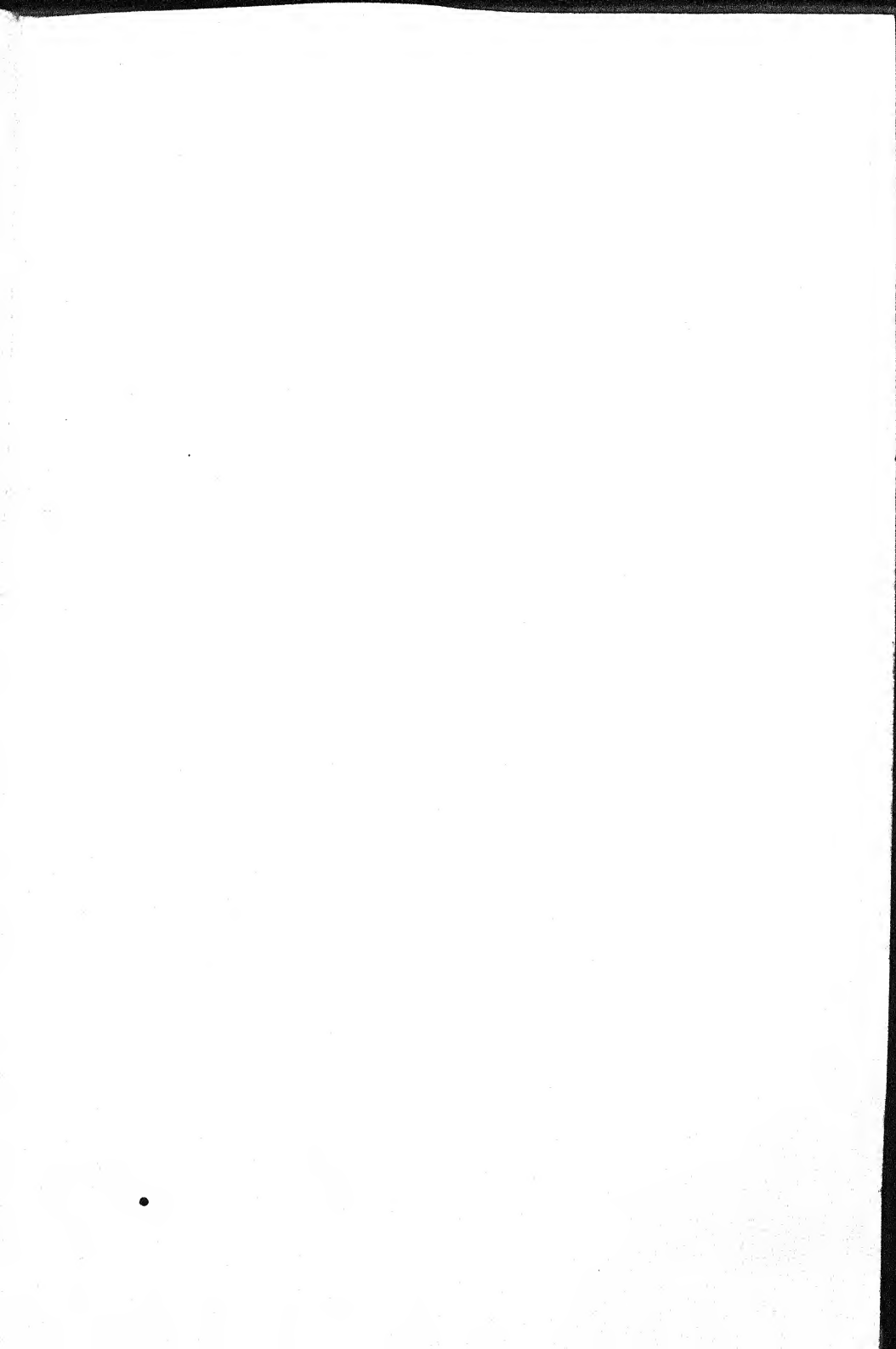
Of these *juvenilia* enough remain to fill a respectable volume. Some of them rise above that mediocrity which Horace tells us is not conceded to poets by gods, men, or booksellers. The gift, however, did not survive the departure of youth with its train of sweet illusions.

Hunter's stay at the University came to a close in April 1860, when he easily obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

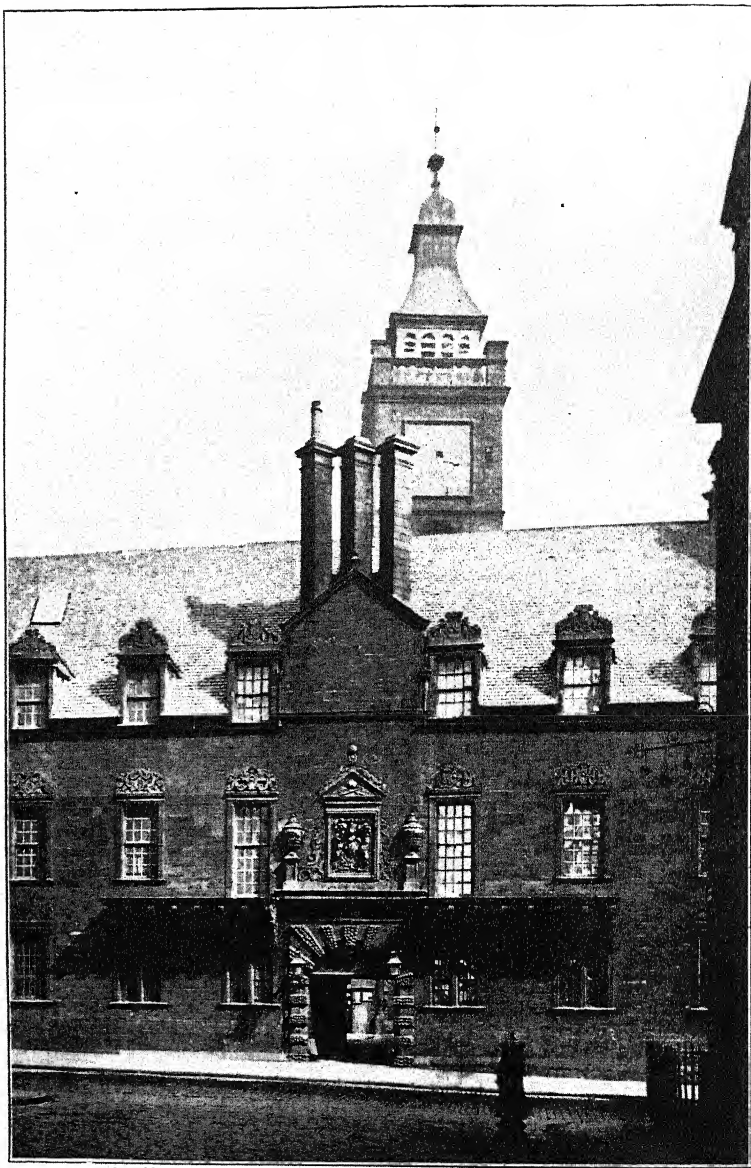
<sup>1</sup> The Rev. David Hislop has favoured me with these reminiscences. The fate of the old buildings of the Glasgow University is not creditable to the civic pride of the last generation. They had stood in High Street since the middle of the fifteenth century, but were reconstructed by public subscription during the Commonwealth. At the zenith of the railway mania of 1846 they were sold to a mushroom company, which paid £10,000 to be quit of the bargain; and to another railway board in 1864, when the University migrated to its present habitat at Gilmore Hill. For some years the halls once dedicated to science served the humble purpose of a goods station. At length, in 1885, the whole was swept away, the main entrance, with an archway leading to an inner court, being re-erected on the north-east of the University's present quarters. (Memorandum by Mr. James Coutts, dated October 9, 1900.)

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Lady Hunter from Mr. R. Vary Campbell.









*Photograph*

THE OLD UNIVERSITY, GLASGOW



To honours he did not aspire, for his mind was already fixed on higher things than the attainment of academic laurels. But he always acknowledged the great practical worth of the Glasgow curriculum and the fatherly care shown him by the distinguished men who taught it. "My lonely education," he afterwards told Miss Murray, "has left some benefits behind it which the nobler training of the English public school and University does not always afford—a box full of dusty poems, half-a-dozen unfinished novels, some hundreds of pages of speculation upon points of philosophy, the habit of working and thinking in private."<sup>1</sup> His connection with Glasgow did not terminate with his academic career. He was enrolled as a member of the General Council, and after his final return from India he evinced a warm interest in University affairs. His Alma Mater, too, watched the achievements of his strenuous life with affection and pride, and we shall find her conferring the highest honours on her distinguished son as a reward for one of his first literary successes. Happy is Scotland in possessing so noble a foundation, which welcomes to her bosom all her sons, and regards rank and wealth as of small account when weighed in the balance against talent directed by industry.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Miss Murray, dated December 22, 1862.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION

IN 1858 Mr. Andrew Hunter carried out a long-cherished resolve by establishing alkali works at Spring Bank near Glasgow. Finding competition severe in the Western capital and the cost of raw material enhanced by heavy freights, he migrated in the following year to Flint in North Wales, where he built extensive works close to the sea-shore. While this speculation was maturing the family cast about them for a home. They treated for Oaken Holt, near the pretty Welsh town; but as its owner was not inclined to give immediate possession, they took a wing of a large mansion named Ledbrook Hall. Here young Hunter spent the long vacation of 1859, and hence he indited the following letter. It is dated October 2nd and 5th, and addressed to his college friend, John Hutcheson, who was then residing at Glasgow:—

TO MR. JOHN HUTCHESON.

*October 2, 1859.*

What shall I write about? You are to have twelve pages, you know, for being such an obliging boy. What shall I celebrate before the praises of the girls, the future mothers of our men, from whom all that is good and a deal that is evil proceed, even the producers of the world and the wearers of ribbons? I have made a few acquaintances amongst them, and find them much livelier, much more natural, just about as pretty, infinitely more charming, more plainly dressed, less accomplished, and more graceful than young Scotchwomen. At church you would think the whole feminine congregation ladies by birth and breeding. By-and-by you find out that those two with the charming rosebud bonnets are farmers' daughters; that number three, with a glossy, well-fitting silk dress, silk cape, the prettiest gloves, and the most wonderful lace articles about her wrists, is the tollkeeper's niece; that the three just before you, dressed in neat mourning, relieved here and there by an indescribable subdued fashionableness, are



the postmistress's orphan grandchildren. In coming out from the evening service a few Sundays ago, a rude little chorister boy pushed past and sent me upon the sweeping, gauzy train of a dress in front. Luckily no damage was done. I watched till the owner turned round (which she had the wonderful good breeding not to do immediately, thereby saving me from any unpleasant confusion), and took off my hat to her as the best silent apology I could make. Forthwith she made one of those stately minuet curtseys which you see depicted in the prints of old *Spectators*. I took off my hat again; she smiled, and ever since Helena has never ceased teasing me about her. She was the butcher's daughter! By "plainly dressed" I do not mean on great occasions, such as church-going or visiting, or, in fact, every evening in the drawing-room; but I mean this. Suppose Miss E—— gets impatient for the post-bag, she will just throw on a morning shawl and bonnet, and you may see her riding her little cantering horse or driving the pony-phæton into Flint in precisely the same vestments in which you would see her taking lessons from the gardener in stripping dead leaves off the geraniums in the greenhouse. Again, I thought at first that the people who travel first-class in England were less wealthy than the corresponding travellers in Scotland, because they wore much commoner clothes. A few days ago I happened to be at Flint station waiting for my aunt when Sir Stephen Glynn, lord-lieutenant of the county, with £20,000 a year, Lady Mostyn and her lord, Dean Trench, and, I think, his daughter, stepped out of a carriage. Lady Mostyn wore an old, old satin dress such as my mother clothes herself in in the morning, or when going on a journey (she has the English notions on the latter subject). Miss Trench's integumental vestments were a shabby tashed print and a polka jacket; she likewise carried a scarlet hood lined with ermine over her arm, swinging it about by the strings. Old Sir Stephen hid himself under a grey top-coat, resembling one which your humble servant felt very much ashamed of wearing last winter, and walked away with Miss Trench under one arm and his gun under the other. The Dean hugged a bundle of newspapers, and had a favourite little bag hanging from his neck; while two valets and two ladies' maids followed behind, directing the porters to carry the luggage, arrayed like the lilies of the field, or my friend Jeames Yellowplush in all his glory. Yet there was a ten-thousand-a-year look about them, such as you never see in Scotland. Shall I describe some mademoiselles seriatim? Recollect they are not girls of sixteen or seventeen, such as I knew in Scotland, but young ladies who have come out, who can make fun of the officers at the county ball under their very martial noses; can appreciate their brothers' difficulties in business, or counsel them in election matters; can carry a jug of gruel to the old woman in the red cottage, and rule over a household of men servants, yea, and women



servants, too, and even the haughty housekeeper at their head, who was with Sir John till Lady Mary died, bless her for a real lady as she was, ma'am; and with my Lady M——, but she couldn't abear her stingy, unmannerly Welsh ways, ma'am, and so forth, through the catalogue of her high-born acquaintances, her wrongs and her sorrows.

Now I think I could mention two or three young ladies of twenty hereabouts, who can do all this, and who besides waltz sufficiently well, but prefer a polka, do not know much about music, but will sing a song out of sheer good nature, or play a quadrille for you; understand whist as well as any lady should, kneel decorously in church in the great square pew, and draw a little. But let us take the younger ones. First there is Miss —— my brother's fiancée; a charming witch of nineteen. She does not care a rap for music, is fond of dancing, picnics, riding, mimicking and making fun of you, and does not care whether you make fun of her or not in return; in my opinion has a hot temper, does not seem enthusiastic about babies or little children; shakes hands with me in the Scotch fashion—cross hands and shake away—kisses Andrew, and is kissed by him every night when he leaves at the hall door before my face, and then calls to me to know whether I am going off without saying good-night to her (*N.B.*—Of course I had shaken hands before, but she does so only to show that she is not at all uncomfortable at my being present at the above-named little osculatory process); asks me if I do not like wild girls, and is altogether a most charming, well-bred ladylike little romp. Then there is Miss —— at present on a visit to Ledbrooke (there is an incessant process of visitation going on here). She will tell stories of the number of bouquets she was presented with when a bridesmaid at a wedding beyond the barriers of Paris, is extremely quiet when she is first introduced, but becomes very chatty afterwards. She is rather sallow and heavy-eyed in the mornings—I see her from my window just now, walking about the park with a nursemaid and some of the children arrayed in a fairy French dress and a scarlet hood which she has just brought from Paris, and to which all the girls swear they will have a sister-hood—but grows very vivacious and fresh-coloured by evening; likes scandal uncommonly, displays an interest in the pickaninnies, understands every game at cards, is delicate, wears wraps of vast circumference, has a habit of giggling a little, and tears her dress a great deal.

She and I took four of the little girls for a walk yesterday afternoon through the woods. The fun we had was not to be described. Neither of us dream of love, but we are extremely fond of flirting with one another. I enticed her into a big hole and left her there like Joseph in the pit, till I was promised a reward for pulling her out again. The final tableau was—myself sitting in an easy-chair constructed of a large bush bent down,



with my back against a tree, and little Annie, Janey, and Fanny on my knees looking over the engravings in my Wordsworth; she sitting on a mound of ferns we had made for her, with my pocket handkerchief laid over it, pulling the rose-bush thorns disconsolately out of her gloves, and sending little Debby out to forage for blackberries. The children then sung some strange, weird Welsh songs and hymns—it was Sunday. The nearest comparison I can think of for the music is a tempest set in a high treble, with solemn echoes, convulsive groans, and starts and fitful pauses in between.

Then there is Polly—she is a little, but such a merry one! How that girl torments people that are her elders both in years and wit! She often makes even Andrew blush, and more than once has had to be frowned down by her sister. She can do nothing—has no accomplishments or learning, a good deal of temper, no lack of impudence and good nature, is never ill at ease—in short an incorrigible hoyden of fourteen. Of course all that is right will come in good time; meanwhile she can dance, torment people, look ugly when she chooses, pronounce “fun” “fohn,” and make eyes at the little choristers in church. There is a young lady at Rockcliffe, Helena by name, whom they annoy about your humble servant, and one evening as I happened not to be there, cruel little Polly actually drove her out of the room by her impudence. I heard of it and determined to be revenged. In the afternoon I hailed Polly and Debby from my window and invited them up. This was a great and solemn privilege, for never except on this occasion had my study door admitted any one of the family. I managed to keep them busy and happy for two or three hours while I finished my poem—greatly to its detriment I fear—by setting them to sort my books, allowing them to rummage over my portfolios, presenting them with a series of tinted views of the Trossachs, drawing a cottage near a wood for them, and setting them to copy it, and hack away at my lead pencils, and so forth, with much pulling of my ears and sticking pins into my shoulders. I then went out for a walk with the little things, paying prodigious attention to Polly, and treating her as a young lady (you know the way). In the evening I played cards, still behaving to Polly as if I were in love with her, and at last asked her if she would come to church to-morrow evening to marry me, and Debby would be bridesmaid. This poor joke I hunted out again and again, always keeping up my gallantry, till when she was going home I went with her, walking by her pony's side and holding her hand the whole way. It was painful to see how the little thing flushed and trembled, and indeed it would have been wrong and unmanly of me had not her cruel conduct to Helena justified me in making her an instrument, at perhaps a little pain to herself, for dear Helena's pleasure. By the time we arrived at the gate, I had



received a solemn promise that she would meet me at church in the evening, and indeed she was in such a state of excitement that I felt sure the precious child would keep her promise. Now I knew that Helena must go with her, for she was the only other lady in the house.

Helena is just the reverse of her chosen friend, Miss —, a quiet, rather melancholy, kindly-eyed, undemonstrative, sincere young lady; one whose conversation is more agreeable than her wit, because it is the very embodiment of gentleness and goodness, whose delicately-moulded English face reminds you not so much of its beauty as of the subdued tenderness of which its beauty is but the outward symbol; whose temper never seems to be subjected to temptation, because all its tendencies seem to be to gentleness and kindness; and who never appears to make a self-sacrifice for any one because to do obliging things for all seems the greatest pleasure she can do to herself. She does not shine so much herself as make her friends seem to shine. She is not the star-beams which attract attention to their own glitter and beauty, but the soft, natural, unthought-of sunshine, which lights up all God's own glorious creation to life and gladness and joy. She is the reverse of operatic music—simple and tender as Goldsmith's ballad of the Gentle Hermit, but deep and unruffled as Weber's Last Waltz, or the andante of one of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words." Like the melancholy Rebecca in Mr. Thackeray's continuation of "Ivanhoe"—a being you sigh for, and blow your nose at the moment that the sigh may not be observed. She is the incarnation of a longing after goodness, purity, and truth, a girl whom you would never offer to die for, but die for as a pleasure, as an unhesitating instinct, without calculation or thought. I wake every morning at six, to see the glorious sun rise, and to think of her calm loveliness. A lady whom you worship afar off with tremblings. I would as soon think of presenting a sonnet to her as I would of uttering a coarse word before an angel; I could not do it. Some people we gratify with stout substantial incense; some we adore with censers so slender and refined that we dread lest even the perfume should reach them. Helena is a finished type of sad loveliness whom I know I shall not marry, and who is destined to form one of the sorrowfullest Might-have-beens of life. She leaves next Wednesday, and I shall never see her again.

For me to love truly I must feel a subdued awe. My idols may be rudely carved if you choose, but there must be something saintly, pale, tender, and unapproachable for me to feel humbled in their presence. No sharpness of a girl's wit can affright me; to flattery I am very susceptible, but never permanently. Badness and levity in a girl I at once heartily enjoy and condemn. Capable of mean and bad actions myself, I admire successful badness and



meanness in others, and yet hate them. Well, I don't often speak of myself or my loves, and I have never spoken of Helena to any one, nor shall I again.

In these confessions Hunter's innermost mental being stands revealed. They prove that he was assailed by those influences which beset the dawn of every man's active life, and which appealed with tenfold force to his ardent and highly-strung nervous system. They show the sensuousness which was always a pronounced note in his character. If he overcame passions which have wrecked so many promising careers, his success was due less to will power than to the refining influence of the pure and gentle girls whom he was privileged to meet at an age when human nature receives impressions like wax, and keeps them with the tenacity of a steel die. No man can be fairly judged as to his relations with the other sex in the absence of a knowledge of his temperament which the critics rarely possess; and those who are inclined to be censorious in such matters are either prone to self-deception or have undeveloped sympathies. The extent and precocity of Hunter's literary attainments are equally apparent in this letter. We see him already in the possession of a wondrous faculty for grasping externals and deducing their less obvious lessons. We note a mastery of graphic description, and a sense of humour which, had they both been equally cultivated, might have made him a bright particular star in the galaxy of the literature of Power. It was, perhaps, the knowledge that he owned these gifts that suggested his first choice of a profession, for he was now in his twentieth year—an age when most men have their paths in life clearly defined. He had those incentives to exertion which have sent so many Scottish youths into the world to conquer it by dint of the perfervid energies imparted by their rugged Fatherland.

Mr. Andrew Hunter's ambition to acquire wealth for the sake of his sons had received a crushing blow. His chemical works near Flint were hardly built and equipped ere they were levelled to the ground by a storm. Most men would have sunk under the calamity, but he gathered up the fragments of his fortune, and started again at Low Walker, near Newcastle. The wreck of all his hopes in Wales made it necessary that



his second son should soon begin to earn a living. Hunter's own tastes suggested a literary career, though he was well aware of the thorns and pitfalls with which it is beset. "All day," he told his *fiancée* three years later, "I have been immersed in Thackeray's 'Newcomes' and in your letters, written while I was at Bath Street.<sup>1</sup> What a change in my prospects since then! A literary man's struggles and rewards, hard and poorly paid labour for eyes and brain, no wife, no home—that was what I had then to look forward to."

A relative whom he visited at Newcastle in 1860 remembers well his firm resolve to succeed as a man of letters. He had already planned a history of the Scottish Border, and had walked great distances to collect materials. The MS. of this and many other early efforts have been reduced to dust by white ants, but enough remains to attest his stubborn industry during this period of *Sturm und Drang*.

For a moment he appears to have contemplated taking holy orders. His father was a shining light among the Non-conformists of Glasgow, and Mrs. Hunter was noted for her gift of extempore prayer. But the observances of religion weighed perhaps too heavily on the Cross Bank household, and they certainly cast a shadow on Hunter's childhood. The spirit of Christianity, its lessons of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and the forgiveness of injuries governed him through life, but the loveless form in which its ordinances were presented in Scotland in the past generation was repellent to a nature which was sensitive and craved for sympathy.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand he was attracted by the Church of England. The majesty of its past satisfied his instincts as a historian; its vigorous life told him that its roots have struck deeply into the fabric of our national existence. The liturgy of that Church, its fanes all glorious within, its heart-stirring music appealed to the grain of sensuousness and the half-developed artistic feelings of the young Scotsman. The

<sup>1</sup> His student's chambers were at 102 Bath Street, Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter wrote from Paris to Dr. Murray on December 29th, 1860—"You may have observed that the philosophy, the religion, and the social habits of a people take their form from its habitat. In Scotland we have a rigorous climate, a transcendental philosophy, *i.e.*, a system which refuses to accept the sensations as an explanation of all our intelligence, and a harsh, mystical religion."



"Observations on Human Nature" for 1859 contain an entry which reveals the secret of the ascendancy of our truly Catholic Church:—

So far as I have seen, the general spirit among the poorer classes in English villages tends to the Church, unless repelled by want of tact, or an incapacity for dealing with them, estranged by neglect or bad example, or wearied by useless, Mayfair sermons. It really does not much matter to my lady who will be driven home to luncheon after service, to be succeeded in due time by dinner, whether the bland incumbent be very instructive or not so that he be sufficiently entertaining and his company be elegant. But poor widow Smith, who will hobble home to a bare, fireless cottage, to find the monthly allowance of tea done, and the handful of meal well-nigh spent, really feels a want of that consolation which the poor learn to find in the Bible. My lady may feel no inconvenience in remaining a miserable sinner so long as she has four thousand a year to support her misery with. A little weeping, too, is highly becoming in this vale of tears, so long as the handkerchief is fragrant with Maria Farina's lotion, and positively the howling wilderness is not such a place of fearful discord after all when the bland incumbent and Signor Verdi unite to set the howls to music. By this I do not mean to say that there is not as noble and as humble a piety in the great man's dwelling as in the lowly cottage, but that the dwellers in the palace have a thousand resources of consolation on earth, and the good people in the cottage have, as an equivalent, only one—in heaven.

Love added motives yet more cogent to those which prompted him to decide on a career. In the winter of 1859 he went to Edinburgh to study history in preparation for the approaching degree examination, and his father requested his old friend Dr. Thomas Murray to assist him with books and advice. No better choice of a mentor could have been made. Dr. Murray had begun life as a minister of the Church of Scotland, but afterwards adopted literature as a profession, and had written several books of considerable value.<sup>1</sup> In his youth he was the bosom friend of Thomas Carlyle,<sup>2</sup> and afterwards

<sup>1</sup> His works, apart from pamphlets, were, "The Literary History of Galloway," 1822; "The Life of Samuel Rutherford," 1828; "The Life of Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow," 1828; "The Life of John Wycliffe," 1829; and "Biographical Annals of the Parish of Colinton," 1863. Dr. Murray also edited Samuel Rutherford's "Last Speeches of Viscount Kenmore," 1827, and "Letters of David Hume," 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Murray was a contemporary of Carlyle's at the Edinburgh University, and their friendship dated back to 1812. He maintained a close



joined the circle of able men who made Edinburgh a centre of intellectual effort when the nineteenth century was young. Amongst his intimates were Lord Cockburn, Sir David Brewster, and J. R. McCulloch, the political economist, the latter of whom procured for him the post of Queen's printer in Scotland. At this time he resided at 13 Dean Terrace with his wife and two unmarried daughters. The elder, Jessie by name, was a winsome lass with blue eyes and a coronet of curls. She was her father's amanuensis and librarian, and no one else was permitted to invade his sanctum or lay a finger on its varied contents. Hunter duly presented his credentials, and was invited to take up his quarters at Dean Terrace. His host was a sound scholar and antiquarian, but he was much more than a delver into a forgotten past. His temper was so genial that he soon won the young man's confidence; his penetration such that he discerned the great qualities of which the shy student was master. After dinner on the first day of Hunter's stay at Dr. Murray's, the pair plunged deeply into classical lore, and Jessie was sent by her father to fetch volume after volume from the library in order to verify quotations. Soon the room was carpeted with literature which overflowed from the chairs and tables. When the guest had bidden the little family good-night, the Doctor turned to his wife and exclaimed, "You'll hear of that young man in ten years." Still stronger was the impression made by the daughter of the house on Hunter's susceptible nature. His visits to Dean Terrace became more and more frequent. The young people were allowed to see a good deal of one another in the genial Scottish fashion; and the lover was not long in perceiving that a noble and steadfast spirit beamed in the gentle eyes which had captivated his soul. Boyhood is commonly said to be the happiest stage of our existence; but the true halcyon period is courtship. Just as the male bird dons his brightest plumage and pours forth his sweetest notes to enthrall his mate, so does he

correspondence with the Chelsea sage at a time when the latter was unsoured by chronic dyspepsia and the buffetings of an unsympathetic world. His early letters reveal a nature very different from the blurred outlines presented by Mr. Froude's injudicious biographies (see Froude's "History of the First Forty Years of Carlyle's Life," 1882, i. 37, and "History of Carlyle's Life in London," 1885, i. 186).



who woos a maiden give free reign to his fancy. He finds himself the possessor of unsuspected powers, and if he has a grain of poetry in his nature it is evoked by the intense emotion of these days of enchantment. In some verses sent to Miss Murray in June 1860, Hunter told the story of his unfulfilled yearnings:—

## I

I laid me on a bank one summer eve,  
 When all the west is one red molten sea.  
 On those bright waves a myriad cloud-isles heave  
 And dark reefs jut in outlines grand and free.  
 And, while fair fantasies my brain did weave  
 Of sunset lands wherein I dwelt with thee  
 Amidst the palm-groves of a crystal stream,—  
 I softly dropped asleep and dreamt a dream.

## II

A fair young band came trooping down a glade,  
 And waded in the brook, and plucked the flowers,  
 And chased the flies that in the sunbeams played,  
 And rested hand-in-hand in rose-tree bowers.  
 Around, the woods of infancy did shade  
 The young soul's first mysterious earthly hours.  
 While careless childhood played adown the brook  
 Until they reached youth's plain, when each his own path took.

## III

One fair-haired boy stepped forth in hope and mirth,  
 Trolling a stave of youth's gay minstrelsy,  
 Trusting with love to this great, kindly earth,  
 And finding everywhere a welcome free.  
 Ah, how he gloried in each morn's fresh birth,  
 And dreamed high dreams of manhood's stormy sea.  
 And spent long days in climbing to explore  
 From distant mountain-tops the sought-for shore!

\* \* \* \* \*

## VI

So torn and spent he lay in dolorous plight,  
 When suddenly adown the brook there strayed  
 A saintly form, all robed in glittering white,  
 With star-like eyes, where holy lustre played.  
 With awe he started at the heavenly sight  
 And knelt to her as more than mortal maid,  
 But she her tapering finger raised on high,  
 • And through the boughs he looked and saw the long-lost sky.

\* \* \* \* \*



## VIII

And as her small white hands his warm cheeks pressed,  
And tiny fingers played among his curls,  
And all was still except his throbbing breast,  
And the small dimpled brook that past him purls,  
Up rose strange thoughts of action and unrest,  
And high ambition her strong wings unfurls,  
And with great joy he listens as the maid,  
Guessing his thoughts, in tender whispers said :

## IX

"No more, no more. Ah, tarry here no more!  
But bravely launch on manhood's stormy sea,  
And through the tempest ply the sail and oar,  
And steer to fame the venturous argosy ;  
While I will climb the cliffs upon the shore  
And watch thee on the deep, and pray for thee,  
And bless the breezes which thy white sails fan,  
And wait for thee till thou return—a man!"

A Latin endorsement in the poet's handwriting records that he "poured forth his love to the goddess among the tombs" of the Dean Cemetery on June 13, 1860. His suit was already won, for he had a subtle charm of manner, the outflow of genius, and a warm heart which was irresistible. Miss Murray's acceptance of her lover was hailed with joy by her parents. Though the husband elect was not yet twenty they were both convinced that his rare endowments would meet with a speedy and rich reward. "Of your getting on well in the world," wrote Dr. Murray on the 6th July, "I have no doubt whatever. There may be a difficulty about making a start, but ultimately I believe that your eminent abilities, your high sense of moral principle and of honour, will achieve success equal to your merits."

The question of a career now reached an acute stage, and Hunter naturally consulted his future father-in-law on the all-engrossing subject. He had already invaded the realms of fiction, but the fragments of a novel, entitled "*Frank Ormiston, a Tale of University Life*," remain to prove that his experience and powers were hardly mature enough to assure success in that most difficult province. The scene is laid on the Borderland, a region full of memories of great and gallant



souls, where the name of every hamlet, stream, and hill seems to breathe music. As is the wont of young authors, its begetter lingers too fondly on the surroundings of nature. It has been acutely said that no sane man ever talked scenery for ten minutes, and that it undoubtedly occupies too prominent a place in literature. The plot of "Frank Ormiston" was far from satisfying Hunter's critical instincts. In an undated letter addressed to Dr. Murray he tells the tale of his failure ruefully enough:—

I have tried my hand at a novel, but find myself quite incapable of coming up to my standard. During the last two years I have been investigating the theory and training myself in the practice of creating, which I look upon as the basis of the novel. In this I find myself sufficiently advanced. But, alas! I have altogether overlooked one element, till I find to my grief that I am lacking in it—the art of combination. There is a practical method of dove-tailing, combining, and managing distances of time, which a thousand observations can never teach and which comes from actual experiences alone. My chapters are individually pleasing, and have won praise from a man of considerable literary repute who kindly looked over the MS., but the whole is a series of good chapters instead of each chapter being a good item in a well-combined whole. There are two categories of novels—that which interests us in the common incidents of life by its vivid pictures of human character, and the ignoble kind, which, unable to depict character, takes refuge in incident alone . . . and tries to tickle us with the marvellous. I need scarcely say that rather than be a novelist of this second class, I would never write another line. . . . To publish at present would be to wound my vanity, to destroy the confidence which my friends repose in me, to bury ideas beneath a tumulus of faulty execution. I have only fallen to rise. At any rate, my present failure—the first I have met with in life—has taught me to be less trustful of my own powers and more pleased with the works of others. . . . And now what are my views? I relinquish my design of devoting myself to letters exclusively, because it may be years before I succeed at all, and in the meantime it would be unjust to my brothers to eat of the family substance (in the present circumstances), and unjust to myself to let the next few years slip away without making some certain provision for life. . . . I am as well educated as any young man I know in the University, having stood first in scientific and practical chemistry, which implies an acquaintance with many minor sciences, having held an honourable position in logic and mental philosophy, and being third in my year in classics.



Dr. Murray had seen an official advertisement proclaiming the advantages of the Indian Civil Service, and further inquiries convinced him that no career gave equal promise of fame and fortune. He urged Hunter to lose no time in preparing for the examination which threw open to the youth of the Empire that hitherto close preserve for the scions of the Honourable Company's Directors and their friends. Hunter's thoughts had been already directed towards the East by a perusal of Professor G. B. Eastwick's "Lutfullah." In the "Observations on Human Nature" he recurs with curious persistence to the types of Indian life and manners presented by that charming story. The Orient, fountain of human knowledge, immutable amid the wrecks of Western civilisations, and unfathomable even to those who seek most eagerly to penetrate her mysteries, held him under a spell. He fell in at once with Dr. Murray's suggestion, and set to work on the curriculum prescribed by the Civil Service Commissioners.

In September 1860 his parents came to Edinburgh for the winter, and took a house at 27 Ann Street. Hence Hunter wrote:—

TO MR. JOHN HUTCHESON.

*September 22, 1860.*

I have a little study which Purves pronounces a gem, and am making good use of it. Since I saw you in Glasgow I have mastered political economy sufficiently to answer every question set at the Civil Service Examination of 1857; learnt to translate French very thoroughly, begun German, got up agricultural and animal chemistry, and not forgotten my classics. . . . I study differently from what I used to do. Before it was a series of convulsive starts and spasms, intermitted by periods of unbroken idleness; but now, since I have new obligations to keep me steady, I work regularly, and am as happy as the day is long.

Two months later we find Hunter making preparations for a prolonged stay on the Continent. His object was to increase his command of French, which was one of the subjects of the approaching competition. On the eve of his departure he found time to offer much excellent advice to one who was passing through the same phases of doubt and mental turmoil as he had just surmounted.



TO MR. JOHN HUTCHESON.

*November 29, 1860.*

I wish to write you a letter before leaving for France which may be of some benefit to you. You are at present suffering from depression of spirits, arising from two circumstances. You have lost the great aim of your life, and you can find no other to which to attach yourself. You recollect how, during your first College years, your whole soul was absorbed in the classics, and what happiness you derived from their pursuit. You remember, also, that whenever your zeal flagged your peace of mind fled, and you became as discontented and miserable as you are at present. Then, however, you had a great aim to return to, and when the evil mood had passed, you were as happy as ever. But now you have lost the goal which Blackstone and class examinations afforded you.<sup>1</sup> Discontented with and finding no relief from the present, you take refuge in the future and distort its possibilities by viewing them through the medium which surrounds you. Now let us consider your position as it appears in the eyes of others. An only son, whose domestic circumstances save him from the toil and penury which cramp the energies of so many students; a scholar so esteemed by his professors as to be spontaneously selected for a bursary, and one who is pointed out as a veteran prize-man in the college courts (I have seen this done, my friend), what more could the heart of man desire? If you were an ordinary student you would desire nothing more: the misfortune is that you have never been, and do not know how to become one. The class duties which so strain the mind of the average man are but a few hours' work for you: in the classics you not only gained the highest honours, but found time to work on your Blackstone besides. You have always been accustomed to do something in addition to your classwork, and not finding any congenial pursuit, you look morbidly into the future. Now the future is a perfidious jade: if you are happy in the present she turns a smiling face to you, but to the man who is discontented with the present the future looks gloomy also.

First, let me find present work for your spare energies. I assume that you have relinquished thoughts of the Civil Service and all ideas of Balliol: now your genius points rather to investigation than to the discussion of abstract principles: I therefore suggest three congenial occupations for it:

1st. An edition of Persius. This author is short, and your energy would not flag over him; his text is still uncertain, and many passages are open to discussion. Professor Ramsay would direct your researches. An edition of Persius by a Scottish

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hutcheson had collected materials for a new edition of Blackstone's Commentaries.



scholar would draw the eyes of the whole republic of letters upon him, and would render our Universities and our learning more respectable in the sight of English and Continental scholars. You might begin with the poet's life in the *Biographie Universelle*, compare all previous editions and, by the study of his contemporaries, you would master the spirit of his age, the spirit in which he wrote.

2nd. A comparison of the philosophy of Locke and Condillac, and of the influence exercised by these thinkers on their respective countries. Begin by reading Sir James Mackintosh's "History of Ethical Philosophy anterior to Locke," and compare the account given of the latter by Mackintosh with his Life in the *Biographie Universelle*. Study Locke's works, especially the "Human Understanding," taking notes from each. Then proceed to Condillac. Read his life in the *Biographie*, his great work, *Traité des Sensations*, and Buckle's comments thereon, chapter xiv., "History of Civilisation." Diverge into every author quoted in these books, and thus compile a mass of evidence which shall set at rest the vexed question of Locke's Sensationalism and the obligations which Condillac is under to him.

3rd. An investigation of the rise and progress of the Settlements which the Arabs and Saracens effected to the east of the Persian Gulf; the stimulus given to these migrations by Mohammedanism; and an estimate of the effects, social and political, which this intercourse has had on Persia, India, and the Archipelago, and of the extent to which their religion and language have been diffused.

The edition of Persius is most in harmony with your antecedents, but would be the most difficult to bring to maturity. The comparison of Locke and Condillac would take the longest to execute, but would lead to a professorship here or in England. The investigation of the Arabian Settlements would afford scope both to your turn for history and philology. It is not nearly so difficult a subject as you would fancy: two years, with your long six months' vacations, would enable you to accumulate a mass of learning such as has never been brought to bear on it before. The information required is scattered through a hundred chronicles and quaint old voyages. Will you take upon yourself the task of collecting it, and so make a great present reputation and win glory which will last for ever? There is a want of some such book at present; and should you not succeed in publishing it, I could incorporate your researches in a great work I am at present collecting for, to wit "Europe in Asia." Of course I would acknowledge my debt to you.

Meanwhile, allow me to observe that you have formed a most erroneous idea of the Church of Scotland. In Glasgow the clergy are not prominent, for there the commercial spirit swamps everything; but in Edinburgh they rank above merchants, however



rich; and in the country the minister is, with one exception, the greatest man in the parish. He is a welcome guest at tables where mere mercantile wealth is never seen; his income is above the average business one; he is surrounded by people who revere his very hat and stick, and lives happily and virtuously in his manse.

A few days later Hunter paid his first visit to Paris. It was no mere pleasure trip, but a period of severe and concentrated study. His tent was pitched at the Hôtel Rochefort, in the heart of the Latin Quarter, but it served only as a sleeping-place—his days being spent in one of those splendid libraries where students of every clime are welcomed. The following letter shows the impression made on the naïve young fellow by a civilisation which differed so radically from that of the bleak North:—

TO MRS. MURRAY.

*December 24, 1860.*

Some day soon I shall write the Doctor a long, serious letter about the French. Meanwhile I will try to give you some idea of surface Paris. Jessie gave me strict injunctions before leaving to observe the bonnets and dresses of the ladies. The bonnets—to begin with that important subject—those I have seen seem to come pretty well forward at the top, and recede towards the ears. The newest things out, I am told, are quilted silk bonnets. They really look very pretty. No lady in Paris can appear in a straw bonnet in winter. Bonnets here cost from 40 to 90 francs and upwards. English ladies say they are very dear, but worth the money after all, *i.e.*, from 34s. to £4. Cloaks are very full, tight at the waist and expanding to great circumference at the lower extremities. The Parisian ladies are by no means handsome in my eyes. The prettiest girls I have seen in Paris are some English ones with whom I am acquainted, and young brides come over for their honeymoons. The ladies maintain that the Frenchmen are by no means handsome in *their* eyes, and accuse them of having a cold and cruel glance, and altogether a suspicious, undomestic look. One young lady said to me, “Ah yes, they have pretty moustaches, but they have no whiskers, and then you know they have all three-quarter faces.” She meant that they had not the open, loyal face of an English gentleman, and I think she is right; but they are a pleasant and affable set to know. Precisely half the population of Boulogne is English, and their number in Paris far exceeds the number of Frenchmen in any English town of the same size. Last Sunday I asked a Frenchified person the way to the Madeleine Church. “I do not speak French, sir.” I repeated



the question to another, who put on an inane air and exclaimed, "Je suis Anglais!" I determined to make sure the third time, and asked a soldier, when it appears my French was so bad that he thought I was speaking English, so he said, "Pardon, Monsieur, je ne parle pas anglais." This all took place in the Rue de Rivoli, which may be styled the English quarter of Paris. A friend of mine wanted to buy a hat, and as he could not speak French he fancied, from my trying to converse, that I knew something about it, and so asked me to go with him. I spoke to the shopman in French, when, to my disgust and disappointment, he answered, "Would you like a French or an English 'at, sir? we 'ave both." Poor me! I had imagined a long dialogue in French and had looked out all the words I thought I should require to use. What funny folk are the British travellers who come to Paris to improve their taste! They buy all the catalogues and rush to the Louvre. There they look up the number of every picture, with the utmost precision, but forget altogether to look at the pictures themselves. As far as I have seen, the Americans are the most intelligent travellers.

You would be amused at the manner in which we students live. Take my Hôtel Rochefort. It has thirty or forty apartments, each of which is inhabited by a student. There is one common stair of waxed oak, and everybody's room opens directly on to it, or on to a little passage leading from it. When you go out, you hang up your key in the bureau of the *maitresse d'hôtel*, so that the *garçon* may clean out your apartment in the morning; and if you go out in the evening, you put your key in your pocket. You never see a servant all day long. There are no bells in the room; you light your own fire, and apply for your own candle at the bureau. The French have two meals a day, *déjeuner* at eleven o'clock—some very early birds have it at ten—and dinner at six to eight in the evening. All bachelors and many married people breakfast and dine at the restaurants, except in *pensions*, where meals are taken at the *table d'hôte* in the house. Pension dinners are proverbial everywhere for being dear and nasty. I have the felicity to be in the wildest part of the wildest city in France. Students are the prevailing element. One early morning I met two couples, masked and dressed in fancy dress, just returning from the night's dissipation as I was going to prayers at Notre Dame. At night, between 12 and 3 A.M., the knocker at the hotel door never rests a minute. Everybody is returning from the evening's amusement, and the hostess has got so accustomed to the knocking that she sleeps as comfortably through it as a steam-boat engineer does within five feet of the grunting engine. I suggested a novel way of rousing her; just let the knocker be quiet for five minutes, and the unwonted stillness would infallibly awake the old lady. The French are always merry, and while one raps in a monotonous, persistent manner, his friend strikes up a



bacchanalian song; the police add their voices to the row, so you can imagine the sweet concert that lulls me to sleep. I have often mused upon the unhappy lot of a British policeman, were cruel necessity to put him down suddenly in Paris: he would find no servant girls. However, the police in Paris are generally above the age which is susceptible to the blandishments of the fair sex. Only once did I observe a soft-hearted policeman with his head inside the door of a shop full of pretty young *blanchisseuses* ironing shirts and collars.

The French are the most sociable people in the world. They manage to give many parties by never spending anything on them. Every lady has her *soirée* once a week, at which all her friends are expected to appear. You have a cup of tea and a thin half-slice of bread and butter handed to you, and that is all. In some families tea does not appear; sugar-water and sweet pastry lozenge are the substitutes. Where the elderly element prevails they play cards all the evening, whist first at two or three tables and a round game for the mass, and finally *loto* for all. *Loto* is one of those charming games invented to develop the emerging intellect in English nurseries. By the time boys get to eight or nine in England, and girls attain to the title of Miss, they toss up their heads at *loto*, and hand it over to the children. In France grown-up people play at it every other evening in the year. By extraordinary exertion, in four hours you may lose sixpence at it. They always play for money in Paris. At first I made up my mind to lose, and looked upon my fine of 8d. or 10d. every evening as I should on the price of white gloves in England—to wit, as a little tax which you pay for entering society. For some time back, however, I have had a great run of luck, and carried all before me in a manner which won for me the esteem, or rather admiration, of everybody; for people are always ready to ascribe good fortune to merit. Where the juvenile element prevails, they dance the whole evening; where there are both young and old, they dance in one room and play cards in another. If they spend little upon their *soirées* they make up for it by their liberality at their balls. A lady took me to a grand ball last Saturday. To hold it in your own house is too commonplace, so you hire an entire flat in a fashionable hotel. I was told that every frock was new that evening, but all the same I prefer our English dresses on these festive occasions. I danced from ten to two, by which time I was fairly tired out, and after seeing our party home in their carriage I had to walk five miles to my own quarters. You in Edinburgh can have no idea of the distances in cities like Paris or London. I shall not be loath to leave Paris. On Friday I go with a party to the opera, and on Saturday to Madame Nimmo's *soirée*, unless I am invited to a ball, which of course takes precedence of everything else. Besides all this, I read from six to nine hours in the



library every day. Whatever may be my pleasures, I never work less than six hours a day. It is this double labour of pleasure and study that wearies me.

A few days later we find Hunter domiciled at Bonn, in the house of Herr Wachendorff, 44 Remigius Strasse. Here he busied himself in comparing the domestic laws of Europe, and made a complete abstract of the very voluminous German Constitution. He was able to discern the first rumblings of the storm which was destined in less than a decade to evolve a vigorous empire from the worn-out political institutions of Germany. In an undated letter to Dr. Murray he writes:—

I had no idea of the convenience of a metropolis till I came to this little provincial town. Since the frost gave way never have I left the house without being wet over my goloshes. As it becomes tangibly dark as soon as the moon disappears behind a cloud, it was no wonder that I tumbled headlong over a heap of rubbish the other night while hurrying dressed and gloved to a ball. It is not upon paving and lighting questions, however, that Prussia is engaged at present; the whole German race is stung by the war-fly. The people are irate against France because she insists, I must own a little too obtrusively, upon her superiority. The Professors are angry with Denmark because Denmark, it is falsely said, insists upon instructing a few thousand families gratis in the Danish instead of the German tongue.<sup>1</sup> The nobles see in war the only means of postponing certain concessions which the King, the people, and every principle of justice demand. The King is himself at once a soldier and a statesman, who hopes to retain by war certain privileges which are challenged in the Parliament now sitting at Berlin by the nobles and people alike.

The writer proceeds to discuss the mechanism by which, early in the century, the whole nation was called to the standards to stem the tide of Napoleonic aggression. Of the practical value of a citizen army he is somewhat sceptical.

Whether recruits who have barely learnt the goose-step, and men who must leave a family to beggary and a business to be snatched up by the first comer, will stand against the veterans of France or England, should suggest grave reflection to Wilhelm's

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the excuses proffered by the Prussians for the war of 1864, which led directly to the struggle for hegemony with Austria in 1866; indirectly to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71; and served as a foundation for Prince Bismarck's "empire of blood and iron."



warlike brain. Every one knows how Cæsar preferred his two famous legions—each not more than 3000 strong—to undisciplined hordes. Remember that war is rather to be avoided nowadays than sought after. It is less *men* that are required than *money*—money for the best and deadliest weapons, money for the commissariat—a matter hardly thought of before in European wars—money for speedy transport. . . . As *The Times* powerfully remarked a few weeks ago, only peaceful commercial states can now make war effectually.



## CHAPTER III

### PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

IN the spring of 1861 Hunter quitted Edinburgh for London, which offered greater advantages to lads preparing for the Indian Civil Service. He was domiciled at 11 Maismore Square, Peckham, the residence of his uncle by marriage, Mr. James Gibb,<sup>1</sup> during this period of strenuous labour, traces of which remain in the shape of bulky abstracts of the authorities on every subject within his range of study. It included branches of research beyond the scope of the impending open competition. We find him reading at the British Museum in view of writing the story of the overland route to India, and we see in these inquiries the germs of his life's crowning work, the "History of British India." Music was his sole relaxation. Forty years ago it was rarely included in the curriculum of a young man's education, though his sister, whether she had an ear or not, was forced to spend weary hours in strumming on the abhorred piano. Had Hunter enjoyed a practical training he might have attained eminence as a musician, for he had a keen and cultivated taste, and his love of the compositions of the great Masters became at times an absorbing passion. While in the throes of the examination he wrote:—

TO MISS MURRAY.

*July 22, 1861.*

Are you really learning to appreciate Beethoven? I have hitherto felt that in asking you to devote so much time to the classical composers I was rather selfish, for I imagined you did not really appreciate them, but only pretended to like them in kindness to me. But now you love them for yourself! I have read this sentence over and over again a hundred times with

<sup>1</sup> He had married a sister of the Right Honourable James Wilson,<sup>2</sup> whom he accompanied to India as secretary.



pride, "With the sonata I am quite delighted; I think it is very fine, and I hope my playing may be worthy of the music itself." That is a noble wish, dear Jessie, and I love you for it. Oh, sweet, if we cannot be great or noble ourselves, let us at least bow before and reverence the great and noble in others! Heaven does not grant it to every man to be a genius, but Heaven gives a loving, admiring heart to all who seek for it. I had a mind when I read your letter to rush back to the city and empty the publisher's shop of his sonatas and symphonies, but that would not be very kind to you, as they are so difficult to play, so I have determined to buy Beethoven's "Fidelio," and return the overture which I had got for you before. "Fidelio" is Beethoven's best opera, if, indeed, it is not his only one: the edition I am buying of the operas is one we need not be ashamed to show among our music when we are married. I shall bring home two for you, so that my industrious little girl will have upwards of 120 pages of new music to learn. It is an easy setting, however; but I implore you not to learn them the less carefully for that reason. I hope you will keep yourself to one till you have learned it thoroughly, but of course I do not presume to lay down rules as to the disposal of your own time and property. After you are mistress of these operas, will you receive another sonata or two? I am so delighted to think that I shall soon be able to present you with such difficult pieces as Chopin's nocturnes and vales, for to one who has thoroughly mastered one of Beethoven's sonatas everything is possible.

The dreaded ordeal opened on 16th July 1861, at Burlington House, Piccadilly. There must be many erstwhile candidates who remember its surroundings—those daily gatherings of hundreds of anxious lads in Lord Burlington's noble colonnade, the rush made for the examination hall as the clock struck ten, and the awe with which each took his appointed place in the rows of desks facing a table occupied by the Argus-eyed examiner. Old Burlington House has been improved off London's face, and the scene of so much youthful agony and triumph has merged into the pretentious pile now occupied by the Royal Academy. It was a detached right wing of the grand Georgian mansion, and the walls were hung with portraits of departed statesmen and philosophers, whose calm eyes seemed to look with pity on the struggling humanity beneath them. Hunter gave his *fiancée* his own impressions in a letter written in the vanished temple of learning itself, on the blue official paper dealt out to candidates, after he had completed his morning's work:—



TO MISS MURRAY.

N. D.

Hitherto I have found the papers rational, well-considered, and easily enough answered if you have read extensively, and, above all, thought carefully over what you have read. Some of the men (there are above 207) turn black in the face as soon as they see the questions, and vanish, others sit looking suicidal for half an hour, and then disappear also. It is very sad to see the distressed looks with which they leave the room: the sons of clergymen who have staked a long and expensive education on the chance of success; younger sons of country gentlemen who have fallen into decay and just succeeded in giving their lads two or three years at Oxford, and then a 15-guinea-a-month cram with some private coach. As a rule, however, the candidates seem wealthy swells, always coming in a cab and sojourning at Morley's at a daily expense of two or three guineas. It is wonderful to see with what resignation even twenty-two-year-old fellows, who have been plucked last year and have this as a last chance, take their discomfiture. After eyeing their papers with a blank, dreary gaze, they slowly take out a cigar-case, examine its contents, smell its Russia delicately, extract a cigar, put on their hats and march out, "Cabby, drive to Morley's." This is repeated twice daily; meanwhile they eat like prize-fighters to support the waste of the body and of the mind. . . . If I am not the best scholar I am certainly the most fluent pensman in the hall. A noble place is this Burlington House. Our seats are padded with feathers and I think covered with morocco. The walls are painted green, precisely the colour of the dear Dean Terrace dining-room, and are hung with about one hundred and fifty paintings by our great artists.

In the following month the anxious postulants learnt the result of the examination. Hunter passed fifth in a list of eighty-six who had satisfied the test and attained the proud position of Selected Candidate. Those who surpassed him were each destined to gain distinction. Sir James Westland, who heads the roll with more than two-thirds of the highest possible marks in mathematics, is among the ablest of Indian financiers. The second is Sir Alexander Mackenzie, late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and the fourth, Mr. Alan Cadell, C.S.I., was for some months at the helm of the North-Western Provinces. The marks gained by Hunter prove the wide extent of his reading and the thoroughness which characterised the Glasgow training. In Moral Science he reached the maximum of 500, a rare and indeed almost unprecedented



feat. His gratitude to his tutor, Professor Buchanan, knew no bounds, as was the old logician's pleasure at his favourite pupil's triumph. He wrote:—

FROM PROFESSOR BUCHANAN.

*September 30, 1861.*

The information which your letter of the 26th current communicates has afforded me intense and heartfelt pleasure. I was not aware that you intended to compete for one of the Civil Service appointments in India. But then, knowing your abilities, I am not at all surprised that the result should have proved so gratifying to your friends and so remunerative to yourself. I have lived to see many of my favourite students rise to high and prominent positions in society. Four of their number are, or have been, heads of courts of law at home or in the colonies. That a distinguished career is before you also, if health and days be granted you, I do not doubt, though at my advanced age I cannot expect to live to witness that career at its climax or consummation. That it may prove as happy and honourable to yourself as useful to your country is my ardent prayer.

After passing a medical examination, the candidate who had satisfied the test of open competition was called upon to name the province in which he elected to serve. Ratification of the choice, however, depended on his place in the list; for there were, of course, only a limited number of vacancies on each establishment. Under this system, which is now a thing of the past, the most favoured of our satrapies monopolised the best men, while Bombay and Madras were perforce content with recruits from the bottom of the list. Hunter's position gave him the key to all. He chose Lower Bengal, in the belief that civilians attached to that Province were under the eye of the Supreme Government, and therefore enjoyed greater opportunities of showing their mettle. His decision was an unfortunate one. The climate of Bengal and the social surroundings in its interior are unfavourable to bodily or mental well-being, and he encountered jealousies there which caused him bitter heartburning and hampered his whole official career. Selected candidates had then to undergo a year's training in knowledge which was supposed to fit them for their new duties. The curriculum embraced Arabic and Sanskrit as optional subjects, while the vernaculars of the probationer's



province, British and Indian law, the history and geography of India, and political economy were obligatory for all. Progress made during the period of trial was tested by examinations held at intervals of six months, the last of which determined the aspirant's fitness to assist in governing India. Hunter resolved to stand first in this final ordeal and concentrated all his powers on the task of distancing his doughty rivals. In a letter written from Edinburgh, he bitterly regrets the loss of an evening at a worthless lecture, and proceeds:—

TO MISS MURRAY.

*March 20, 1862.*

I cannot afford to waste time. It is easy to be a company-man and yet to be superior to the common run in an intellectual aspect; but it is impossible to be first class—I mean the very first, one of a set of men picked from the whole country for their talents, and fritter your evenings away in walking quadrilles and consuming ices. I aspire to a circle far above the circle of fashion—I mean the circle of Power. Such a circle is unknown anywhere except in a metropolis; and until I can earn a position in that circle I do not choose to waste my time filling up a lady's drawing-room or eating people's corner dishes. Some day, dear, if God spare us, we shall enter that circle of Power hand in hand; till then patience, frugality, concentration. . . . My time is becoming very precious. I was never made for public examinations, for I do not economise time. Whenever I read up a subject I become so interested in it that I go into the minutest points rather as if I intended to write a book than to stand a general examination. Never do I attack a subject without writing what would make a bulky pamphlet. I have over 500 pages of foolscap on points in the different revenue systems of India, and so in other branches.

His studies during the year of probation were carried on in Edinburgh, where he had the advantage of special tuition in Sanskrit and Hindustani from Dr. John Muir,<sup>1</sup> who was profoundly versed in several Oriental languages. The result of these labours is given in some pretty verses which he sent to Miss Murray on the 26th March 1862. He told her that he had translated them literally from the Sanskrit while "walking home the other day from Colinton," a village four miles

<sup>1</sup> He founded a Sanskrit Chair at the Edinburgh University, of which his brother, Sir William Muir, is Principal.



south-west of Edinburgh where Dr. Murray had fixed his residence:—

Like drift-logs on the sea's wild breast  
We meet and cling with fond endeavour  
A moment to the same wave's crest :  
The waves divide—we part for ever.

We have no lasting unions here,  
To-day's best friend is dead to-morrow ;  
For everything we now hold dear  
There comes a stab of future sorrow.

Will He who robes the swan in white,  
Who dyes the parrot's bright green hue,  
Who paints the peacock's changeful light,  
Will He less kindly deal with you ?

Be not too anxious for the morn,  
God will thy daily bread bestow.  
The moment that a babe is born  
The mother's breasts begin to flow.

Admirers of that exquisite idyll, the "Old Missionary," will recognise one of its many charms in these lines.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note the changes which the author's mature judgment introduced into his early efforts. During the Easter holidays of 1862 he tore himself away from his books to enjoy a walking tour through the northern English counties. It began at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and he thus described the impressions left by that ancient town, ere the beauty of its surroundings had been obliterated by the prosaic evidences of "meckanickal arts and merchandize," as Bacon says:—

TO MISS MURRAY.

*April 8, 1862.*

I never saw a river which met the sea so abruptly as the Tyne : no swelling out into a firth, but a narrow stream with a bar, over which the line of white breakers are continually dashing, and then immediately the broad salt ocean. For many miles the sides of the Tyne are as closely covered with factories as the sides of a street are with houses. The soil is sandy and alluvial ; the river has accordingly scooped out for itself a bed which is sometimes sixty feet deep. Everywhere the banks rise as high as the Moray Place houses. Beneath these towering banks, or climbing up their sides, or perched on their tops, the works puff their smoky

<sup>1</sup> "The Old Missionary," 1896, p. 101.



columns from innumerable chimneys. The river is crowded with craft of all sizes; and the little steamers dash hither and thither through the wooden throng in an alarming manner. Tynemouth Castle is built on a projecting hillock, protected by the ocean on one side, and by a deep, wide, but now dry moat on the other. It is fortified with cannon, some of large calibre, and solid walls. Huge pyramids of shot are heaped up on each side of the embrasures. Armstrong guns point threateningly towards the ocean, and the whole place swarms with soldiers. Within the fort is the old ruined cathedral or abbey—I do not know which. It has once been of great extent, about the size of St. Giles, and is now surrounded by a spacious graveyard, where the garrison officers lie in ultimate and lasting equality with the master-mariners, ship-chandlers, and merchants of North Shields. There is something which makes a thinking man sad in the sight of the abode of the dead thus intruded on and protected by the instruments of death. As I munched my biscuits in the sunshine, I pictured to myself the horrors of a fight in a churchyard thickly planted with tombs. . . .

War is a barbarous relic, but it is still made use of because we have no tribunal to settle disputes between nations as we have to settle disputes between individuals. The "wager of battel" was a great improvement on waylaying your adversary and stabbing him in the back, but now that individuals are sure of certain redress from the Courts of Justice, it has become an antique curiosity. When I am Secretary of State, 31½ years hence, I shall give you some more of my opinions upon this subject.

The final examination of selected candidates took place in July, and Hunter journeyed by sea to London to undergo it. His mother saw the last of him at Leith Pier.

#### TO MISS MURRAY.

July 4, 1862.

Poor mamma! she behaved *too* well at the parting. She knows I dislike scenes, waving handkerchiefs, and so forth. What does the kind, sorrowing lady do? When the second bell rang she shook hands and went away. I watched the dear black shawl down the long pier and across the lock-bridge at the mouth of the wharf till a great Pickford van shut it from my sight; the poor old legs were tottering, but not once did she turn her head—not a single wave of the handkerchief. I knew the agony her stoicism cost her, but I could not run after her. The ropes were cast off. It was over. . . .

We had an excellent passage, Cleared from Leith at three on Wednesday; entered the Thames at 9.30 last night, and drew up alongside the Victoria Wharf at three this morning. Who were my



fellow-passengers? I begin with Professor Skene, Advocate, Law Professor in Glasgow University, proprietor of a neat little estate in Mull, once a midgy in the navy, now a stripped and sorrowing father, but one of the most amiable, delightful, white-haired, aristocratic old gentlemen you can conceive. We knew each other of old. He taught the lady passengers the distinction between a ship and a barque; explained to the captain the difference between the old system and the new of reefing topsails in the navy; pointed out some curious coincidences to me, during a long night walk on the solitary deck, between the Gaelic and Turkish languages; and kept all his neighbours laughing during dinner at his funny and perfectly delicate anecdotes. Then there was a myrmidon of Somerset House returning from his honeymoon with his bride. (Dearest, all beautiful young wives seem to me to resemble you.) There were about forty other people, most of them well bred, not one of them offensive. After we got alongside the wharf I clearly saw no more sleep was to be got—chains dragging over my head, steam blowing off, tide flowing against the ship's side and under my open window. Up I got, bribed my way out of the docks, and so on into the great city. Past the grand old Tower, past the Mint, with the guards pacing sleepily up and down, their bayonets glittering in the sunrise, down the Minories, along Leadenhall Street, until I came to the old India House. That wretch, Sir Charles Wood, has broken up the venerable tenement; the beautifully painted but now bare walls and black fireplaces stare through the dismantled windows, and auctioneers' bills, in red and blue, are stuck over the whole building, inside and out. When I thought of the great dead who had written and schemed within the rain-streaked, gilded chambers, my heart swelled within me with indignation. On, on, past the Bank of England and the Mansion House, and past the grand Cathedral of England, St. Paul's. I gazed upon the surly iron-spiked gates of the Old Bailey, grim with centuries of moral filth, and still hurried on, peering into great butcher's market, till I came to where waggons of peas and cauliflower choked every avenue to Covent Garden. Then back to the steamer, after eight miles of hard walking. Everybody was up. I conducted some of the ladies to the opening of the docks, where a fine barque was being hauled through the drawbridge, and the crew were shouting a lusty fo'c'sle chorus as they toiled at the capstan. Then I took them to hear the fishwomen chaffing one another on Billingsgate Stairs. Then, after a grand search for cabs, we succeeded in getting only two, more than a mile away. A lucky thought struck me. We hailed a lot of wherries. In we got—ladies, gentlemen, babies, fishing-rods, and portmanteaus; rowed up stream to London Bridge; landed at the station side; shook hands at the head of the stairs; and got into different cabs, never to meet again.



Glimpses of his thoughts at the crucial period which followed are given in the next letters.

TO MISS MURRAY.

July 5, 1862.

To-day I have been very busy; up at 6-30, and working at law ever since. I had intended to walk down to Greenwich and calm my mind by gazing again upon the lineaments of the illustrious dead in the painted Hall, but I had not time to spare. I am so well and happy. I have a great warm rush of life in my frame. I feel like a strong man about to run a race. The next ten days will be a period of intense pleasure to me. Next to being by your side, silent and loving, I like best to stride up and down the room while you are playing the masterpieces of Beethoven or Mozart: next to that pleasure is the delight of wielding my pen upon congenial subjects. I have such a torrent of enjoyment from merely putting forth my energies, for action is happiness. I wish I could write you some verses, but the talent has gone from me. I can make rhymes, but they no longer please me. I enjoy other people's songs more than ever, but shall never write verses myself again.

Sunday, July 6.

This morning I heard cathedral service at St. Paul's at 9-45. The remainder of the day I have spent over Tennyson's "Miller's Daughter," nobly illustrated. The evening has been devoted to meditation upon some of George Herbert's beautiful poems, and to many tender thoughts about you. I know not how to be grateful enough for your gentleness and love. My temper is so ardent that not only do I commit grave individual faults, but my whole plan of life is based on selfish and earthly ground. It is not successful action and deliberate self-restraint that make a man truly good, for piety depends not upon our actions but upon our motives. My motives at present tend towards the earth. I receive blessings thankfully, but I do nothing to repay the bountiful Giver. I do the work of the present moment, and revel in anticipations of the future; but it is my *own* work and my *own* future. I am living to myself, knowingly, and with little remorse.

I am no link in Thy great chain,  
But all my company is as a weed;  
Lord, place me in Thy comfort, give one strain  
To my poor reed.

So sang the old English priest who declined the pomp of a bishopric for the secluded usefulness of a country parsonage.

The result of the final examination justified the student's ambition. He passed at the head of sixty candidates, beating



Messrs. Westland and Mackenzie by a few marks. This success was due to his great proficiency in political economy, a subject in which he altogether distanced his rivals. But his cup of rejoicing had the inevitable *amari aliquid* in the thought of the separation from Miss Murray, which was at hand. The young people had resolved to postpone their union until the year of probation in Calcutta, which was then incumbent on all Bengal civilians, had run its course. Hunter alluded to the bitterness of the parting in an undated letter.

TO MISS MURRAY.

At present I have no great work on hand. There are many vast projects which, if health and long life be given me, I trust to accomplish. But the boat is still lying at her moorings; not a sail has been unfurled, not a night's anxiety spent in shaping her course. When I have put out to sea, and am anxiously guiding the ship to port, then indeed shall I feel my life valuable. It would be bitter to die before my plans were completed. That was poor Macaulay's fate; that was the bitter cry of the great monarch whom he loved. So at present I do not feel particularly careful about life or death. I am confident that here or in another world this delightful, glowing life and activity will remain to me, and the great Mover and Governor will be the same in every part of His universe as in this. If it be His will that we do not meet after the parting in October, I would have you know that, so far as regards myself, the only bitterness in death would be the thought of your loss. Listen, love, to my deep conviction—they are the words of the great Mozart: "As death, rightly considered, fulfils the real design of our life, I have for the last ten years made myself so well acquainted with the true friend of mankind that his image has no longer any terrors for me, but much that is peaceful and consoling. And I thank God that He has given me the opportunity to know Him, as the key to our true felicity. I never lie down in my bed without reflecting that, perhaps, young as I am (Mozart was then twenty-seven), I may never see another day. Yet no one who knows me can say that I am gloomy or morose in society. For this blessing I daily thank my Creator, and from my heart wish it participated in by my fellow-men." Dearest, if the day comes which tells you of my death, read this over, and know that what I am now I shall have been to the last—always trusting, loving, and working for you.

The two following months were taken up with preparations for the voyage to Calcutta. Though the Cape route was



obsolete, and Indian shops were even then almost as well supplied as those of London, it was the fashion to start for India with an outfit of clothing calculated to last for several years, and including many items of no use whatever to the exile. Many and anxious were the days spent on these elaborate details; but at length the sad good-bye was bidden to the old people and the bride-elect. On 4th October 1862 Hunter embarked at Southampton on the P. and O. steamer *Pera*, and entered on a voyage full of the charm attaching to the unknown.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE VOYAGE TO INDIA

THE speed and luxury of modern travel have destroyed all vestiges of the romance which, forty years ago, still clung to a long sea voyage. Hunter's receptive mind was stirred to its very depths by the novelty of his surroundings on the good ship *Pera* and the glamour thrown by the new scene whither he was speeding. His impressions were faithfully recorded in a journal which was despatched to Miss Murray in instalments from every port of call, "in order," as he wrote, "that you, who enter into all my views, may appreciate my ambitions, rejoice with me in my successes, and be glad with me in all my joys." The incidents of the overland journey are as familiar to the gentle reader as those of a trip down the Rhine, and even Hunter's descriptive powers failed to invest them with many new attractions. His love of adventure and longing to strike every note on the lyre of enjoyment were shown at Malta, where he piloted a bevy of fair passengers through the sights of the island fortress in the very limited time allowed by the ship's stay. In the course of the transit by rail through Egypt he organised a visit to the Pyramids, though the Nile inundations were out and the Badawin more than usually aggressive. Here a collision with the savages who tendered their services as guides was avoided only by his tact and firmness. Though he contrived to see more of the panorama unfolded by the overland route than any one on board the *Pera*, he often grasped the true inwardness of sights on which the eye of the ordinary traveller rests with indifference. While journeying between Alexandria and Cairo in a jolting railway carriage he wrote :—

TO MISS MURRAY.

October 20, 1862.

Mosques, mud villages, donkeys, fields of maize, rice, and barley, palm trees in flower, cocoanut trees, trains of solemn,



long-necked camels, men half naked, women clad in filthy blue wrappers, swarms of children selling water from jars, all these I have noted in succession, just as I write them down, besides a hundred other grotesque objects which are whizzing past us on this thickly-peopled plain. So strange it is, the mixture of homely and novel sights. At one moment we pass an engine inscribed "Atlas Works," and straightway we overtake a brilliant company of the Pasha's guards caracoling on the high road. Now we are flying past a party of turbaned Moslems seated cross-legged by the wayside, their faces towards Mecca, whispering a noontide prayer. Anon we come to a well, upon the steps of which women are standing with slender pitchers on their heads, and we see a camel lazily turning a water-wheel by which the precious fluid is raised from a tiny canal and sluiced upon the surrounding maize fields.

The whole country is one vast flat, interspersed with clumps of palms and sycamores, with dreary streams which seem to rise and to flow nowhere, with dismal, mud villages on hillocks artificially raised, and often surrounded by a moat. As far as the eye can reach is waving grain. No hedges or walls chequer the landscape, only black stones which serve as landmarks, and herds of goats, camels, or asses grazing dejectedly under the midday sun. We are truly in a biblical land. Village Rebeccas still go forth to draw water with antique Egyptian vessels on their heads. Rachel still stoops over the well to supply her flock; cursed is still the man who removes his neighbour's landmark. Now we see how he who casts his bread upon the waters shall find it after many days: for there is a practice of surrounding a field as soon as it is cut with embankments six inches high, and letting water in to a depth of about four inches. Upon this unstable fluid the seed is cast, and the water gradually subsides leaving the seed already germinating on the dry mud. I have never passed through a land so densely peopled: the swarming districts of Holland are nothing to it: everywhere are population and poverty. For the population we have to thank the inexhaustible fertility of the soil and the vigorous rule of the great Mehemet Ali; for the poverty we are indebted to the excess of population and to the immemorial land tenures which even that illustrious reformer could not, or would not, change. Government possesses most of the land and grants it to great landlords either as a reward for services or in return for a yearly rent in kind. Beneath these are sometimes three or four minor landholders each possessing some vested interest, and at last comes the actual farmer who has a sort of perpetual lease on condition that he pays an annual proportion of the fruits of the soil. No one has a full proprietary right, and, therefore, nobody will improve. Meanwhile the cultivator has gone on marrying and giving in marriage, dividing the land among his male children to be in turn subdivided by them,



till now each field is in the hands of a separate husbandman and is barely large enough to yield the scantiest food to his household and strips of coarse calico for himself and his wife when the old pieces have fallen in shreds from their limbs. In England we see bodies of reapers on every farm and half-a-dozen ploughs in each field at sowing time; in Egypt seed-time and harvest go on side by side all the year round. Here is a patch of maize being cut down, immediately adjoining, without a hedge or any partition, an inundated field being sown. There is a solitary husbandman reaping his barley, a little farther on a sower casting his seed upon the waters; close beside him a half-naked ploughman is lounging behind his team consisting of an ox and a dromedary, and inspecting the movement of his plough which seems to require no holding, and looks very much like a low wheelbarrow with a short-pointed log instead of a share. No merry bands of reapers; no trios of emulous ploughmen: everywhere a solitary listless husbandman. Oh, how M'Culloch's soul would rejoice to point out the effects of small farms and peasant holdings; how J. S. Mill's gentler heart would grieve as he dwelt upon these results of an improvident increase in population!

Hunter gained much information on Eastern manners by assiduously cross-examining his dragoman, Hassan by name. He had studied Mohammedan law during the year's probation at home, and was surprised to find theory and practice diverging widely in a land which looked to the *Shara'* for guidance in marital as in other relations. Wives were bought and sold like cattle: the boy-husband had no voice in the selection of his partner, and divorces were everyday occurrences in Egypt.

TO MISS MURRAY.

October 28, 1862.

The poor girl awaits her future lord in trepidation. Poor children, owning perhaps to thirty years between them; their first duty in married life is to dry each other's tears! . . . All that Hassan has told me may not be true, but when I recollect the strictness of the Mohammedan law of marriage, especially with regard to the first wife, the wide discrepancy shows that no code of laws can bind or elevate a people too degraded for the state of civilisation for which the laws were formed, just as no system of political liberty can give freedom to a nation too servile to exact it.

At Suez the travellers embarked on the s.s. *Candia*, which was to carry them to Calcutta. Eight years later, to a day, I



made the same voyage on the same vessel. She was one of the oldest screw steamers afloat: and I well remember a huge wheel, which revolved just abaft the saloon, and served as medium between the engine-power and the screw-shaft. So thick were her iron plates that, after serving for nearly thirty years as a passenger steamer, she plied for many more as a sailing craft in the New Zealand trade. Her bright-eyed Lascar crew, stealthy and agile as cats, contrasted strangely with the splendid specimens of that rapidly vanishing class, the British sailor, who were still employed on vessels plying in European waters. The following *Reisebilde*, taken from the diary of Hunter's voyage in the stout old ship, have enduring value:—

TO MISS MURRAY.

October 30, 1862.

The political value of Aden is not to be underrated. It is one of the keys to our Indian Empire. I am not one of those who think that if the French could get possession and retain the mastery of our Overland route our Indian Empire would be imperilled. I do not think it unlikely, however, that in the event of a collision with France, the Indian route would be one of the points of dispute. I do not see why we should be unwilling to have it so. The battlefield must be somewhere; better have it in the Levant or the Red Sea than in the English Channel. You understand our position in the Mediterranean? The French have Toulon, with divers other fortified harbours on their coast, and that unlucky colony Algeria on the southern shores of the great inland sea. From each of these quarters stores and men could be obtained; to each of them the *rates quassas* of the French fleet could fly for refitment. Now for the *points d'appui* of England. Gibraltar, Malta, and Corfu, at the entrance, middle, and extreme east of the Mediterranean—these are our strategic points. The first two are certainly impregnable to any weapon but the heavy bomb, but have no natural fertility proportionate to the number of men required to defend them. Corfu is one of the most fertile and delicious stations in which a regiment can be quartered; but if I remember rightly it is imperfectly fortified; still it would be of great value as a retreat for the sick and wounded.

November 2, 1862.

Now, dearest, on this beautiful Sunday morning, when I am in the most perfect health and spirits, when the present has no pains and the future seems all joy and glory, I am going to speak to you of



the most solemn subject which a human being can think about. We are both mortal; it is right that we should have our minds prepared for the great last account. In case I am the first to go, I beg you not to let our past sweet intercourse embitter the rest of your life. Words cannot express the joy and gratitude I feel for the influence you have exercised upon my destiny as an immortal being. Know, my love, that if I am suddenly called away I shall enjoy in some other of God's worlds the fruit of the good seed which your dear example and saintly womanhood have sown in my soul here. I have drawn out a paper which I transmit to England by this post, requesting my parents to give you six volumes out of my library, whichever you may choose. Three of them may be college prizes. I think two of your selection should be "*Prior's Life of Burke*," in two volumes. It is splendidly bound, with the college arms in gold upon peach-coloured calf. Also, I have requested them to let you have my gold Albert chain. I bought it out of the first money I earned by my own brain; it will make a nice chain for you, or you can have the key taken off, and use it with a locket of my hair as a bracelet or necklace. I was going to have asked them to let you have some of my verses; this my mother might grudge, so I shall send you some by book-post from India. Dearest, I do not at this moment apologise for their poverty; they are the work of your boy, and that will be enough for you. Would I could win a great name before you became my wife; but, patience, I doubt not you would rather share my obscurity than await in solitude for my greatness.

At Point de Galle, which was the predecessor of Colombo as the Clapham Junction of Eastern travel, Hunter was profoundly moved by the vivid foliage and the exuberant life of the tropics, now seen for the first time. The joys of the contrast they presented with the sombre colouring of that extinct volcano, Aden, and the confined and highly artificial life on board ship, were too deep to be felt otherwise than alone. He threw himself into a native craft, and on landing plunged into the belt of cocoanut palm forest which fringes the land-locked harbour.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*November 9, 1862.*

Everything was alive. Thousands of yellow sand-crabs ran about my feet, burrowing in great trepidation. The hum of insect life was wonderful: lizards of grey and green were perched on every log, holding up their pert, motionless heads as I passed; butterflies of the most gorgeous hues floated by, their purple plumage glowing in the sunshine; only the birds were still.



These raptures were cut short by his arrival at a cluster of new thatched huts, which turned out to be a smallpox hospital. Retracing his steps, he gained the seashore, and sat him down on a rugged promontory:—

Now came the treat of the day. I had been walking in the blazing sunshine, rather heavily laden. First, I had my umbrella held up in one hand; in the other I carried a huge fresh cocoanut torn from its stem that morning and sold to me for one halfpenny. On my back was my new morocco courier bag, containing Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," your two photographs, and some wild flowers which I had plucked in passing. They were of the brightest hue and heaviest perfume, but they are so squeezed and scentless now that I shall not send you any of them.

I sat on my rocky retreat for some hours, undisturbed except by the arrival of a black fisherman, who plied his rod and tackle from an adjoining cavern. . . . The poor fisherman caught nothing, so I gave him two-thirds of my cocoanut and a few coppers. He was thankful, and guided me to a neighbour who had a catamaran with mast and sail. I hired it for the afternoon for two rupees, and put out through the surf with a crew of four blacks. It was so very narrow that I could not get my feet comfortably into it, so I had to sit on the gunwale, with one leg hanging over on each side. Of course they were continually washed with the waves, but I had got so drenched in coming out through the surf that it did not matter. I held firmly on by the gunwale, at the same time holding the sheets (or stern ropes which manage the sail, it was what we call a log-sail at home). A catamaran can never be capsized, only smothered by the waves; and it was so calm as to make the latter mishap out of the question that day. The boat sailed very badly against the wind, as is the case with all native craft compared with English, and I found I could make a far better tack than the natives themselves. I could not steer, as their only helm is an oar tied to the right gunwale near the stern, with which the steersman keeps up a continuous and arduous paddle. After a few unsuccessful attempts I resigned this primeval rudder, and only gave directions. The sail I took in my own hands, and pulled the sheets in well, as we do in English boats when sailing high up to the wind. At last we got a fair offing, and had a very fine view of the lovely cove and the neighbouring coast. Suddenly the sail was carried away by a gust from the top of the mast, and fell into the water alongside. The men were dreadfully disconcerted. However, we soon got it stowed into the narrow boat (it was so narrow that with one hand I could span from gunwale to gunwale at the top), and I gave orders to paddle to the *Candia*. The current ran strong against us; the men stopped; I began to be anxious about time; for half-an-hour we paddled hard and made nothing.



At last the tide turned, and we reached the steamer, exactly half-an-hour before she sailed. So ended my day at Ceylon.

Among Hunter's fellow-passengers was Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Wingfield, destined to become Chief Commissioner of Oudh. He was attracted by the bright young fellow, and gave him much advice bearing on his future career, which was treasured up in a memory from which nothing escapéd. From him he learnt that Mr. James Gibb, his uncle by marriage, had actually passed them at Cairo, unnoticed, on his way home. The poor lad had calculated on help from this connection, and was appalled by the prospect of landing in Calcutta an utter stranger.

TO MISS MURRAY.

November 9, 1862.

This is a blow to our prospects, besides the sickness of so near a relative and the feeling of loneliness which besets a man in a strange land. You must know that I should have lived with my uncle, and so could have saved nearly all my income. Most of the young civilians live with a friend, thus having board, servants, and horses free, and yet manage to spend their whole salary. Dearest, for myself I care nothing; I am brave and strong; and as regards you, I shall have to work the harder in order to make more money, that is all. I do not know whether I do not price myself above my value, but certainly I have not a moment's doubt but that, if health be granted, I shall make a great figure in India. I was quite touched by the kind manner in which Mr. Wingfield told me of my misfortune. He is a silent, noble-looking man, mingling little with others and talking but rarely with ladies; of simple bachelor habits, wide reading, and capacious memory, and the last man in the world to make an undesirable acquaintance. Withal he is so affable that no one grudges him his high honours, and so entertaining that any lady he does open out to is only too delighted to have him talk to her for hours.

On 10th November 1862 the *Candia* reached the Sand-heads, as the treacherous shoals at the mouth of the river Hugli are styled. Hunter's last night in his floating home had come, and the friendless lad felt desolate indeed. He knew that the battle of life was beginning in an arena of which his "bright dreams and fancyings strange" had taught him but little. Thus did he describe the thoughts that surged on his brain at the threshold of a new career:—



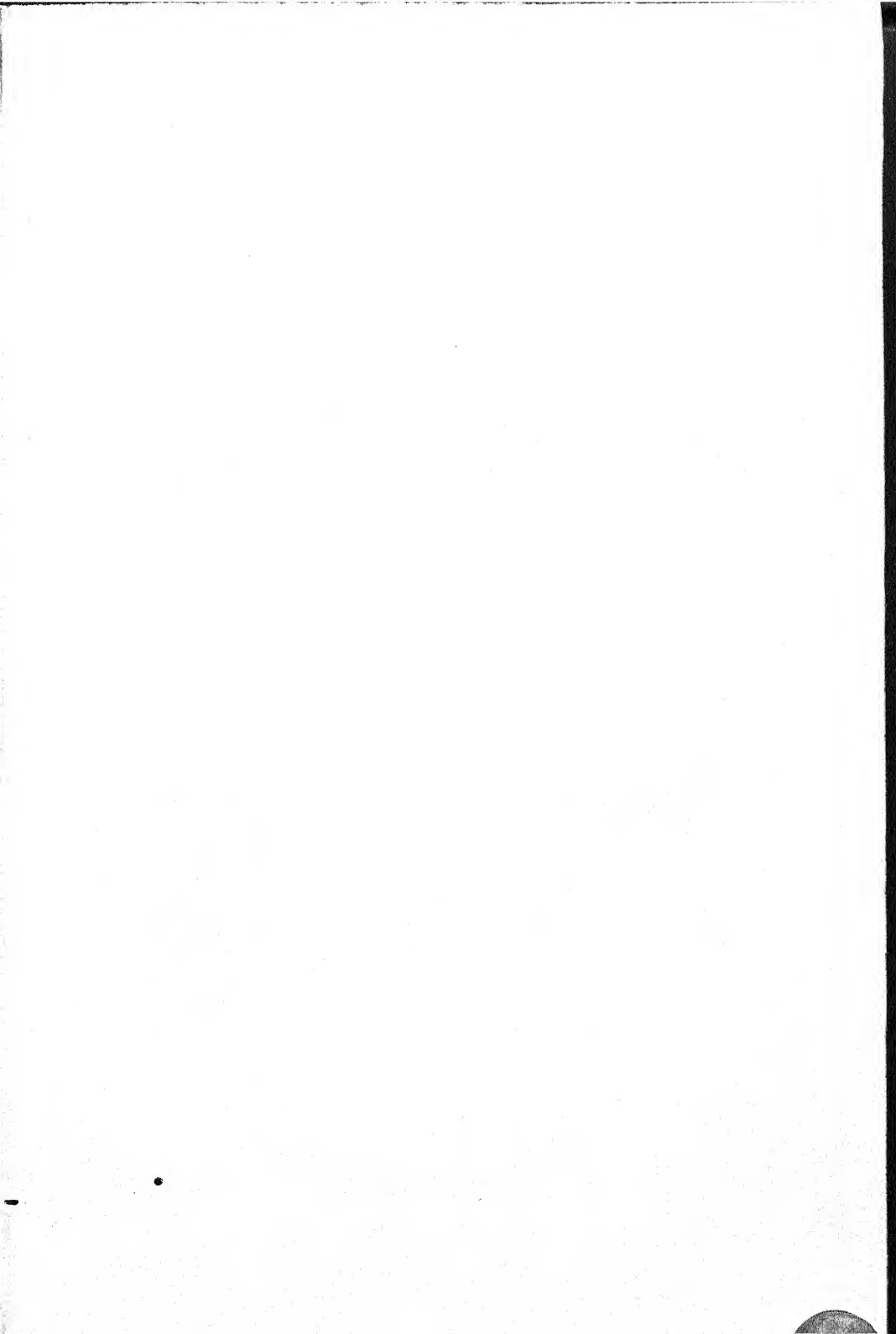
## TO MISS MURRAY.

November 11, 1862.

We all sat up singing glees upon the moonlit deck till half-past twelve. Then we shook hands with one another as people who are parting for ever, and so ended the last evening on board the *Candia*.

When the decks were deserted, save by those who found their cabins too hot for use and therefore slept upon deck, I went to the fore-castle, and there, all alone, poured out a prayer for my own family and for yours. Dearest, I do not pray for success, or indeed for anything connected with my career. I know full well that time and chance work out God's will, but I also know that He has given our destiny into our own hands. I pray that I may be enabled to do my duty at all times, and to bear with a loving heart the good and evil of life. Indeed, in the full presence of the majesty of Nature I think little of my own ambition. In the solitary moonlight there was a rest which worked its way into my soul. I compared men's lots to the lamps which were fixed upon the ship's masts. One or two were low down on deck, another was a few feet up the mast; one was high up on the extremity of the yardarm, another was on the top of all. But how faint, low, and flickering were they all compared with the unquenchable stars above! How they swayed up and down as the ship lurched from side to side, now exalted, now abased; while God's firmament shone down upon the world, lighting up its changing scenes, but too high and majestic to share its mutations. I thought that, as the ship rolls upon the waves and is never deflected from its course by them, but keeps on steadily to the haven to which the steersman directs it, so we are subjected to much incomprehensible buffeting, yet we know certainly that we can command our destiny if we are willing to bear all things with strong patience. Again I compared the strokes of chance to the winds which blow from every quarter of the globe, yet the mariner uses them all to waft his ship onwards in its appointed course. So, dearest, I gathered hope from heaven and ocean that a strong human will is able to keep steadily on its path despite of all the contrary blasts and adverse currents of fortune. Then I looked over the rolling waste of waters till my eye longed for something to rest on. At last I espied, just above the horizon, the beacon light of the Sandheads, and forthwith I remembered that, amid all the turmoil and unrest of my ambition, there was one light that ever burns brightly and tranquil in the far distance. That light is the happy meeting of my dear bride and myself at the end of this changeful year.









*P. Slater sc.*

MISS MURRAY, 1863



## CHAPTER V

### CALCUTTA FORTY YEARS AGO

THE old *Candia* warped to her moorings in the Hugli on the 11th of November 1862. Fair indeed was the scene which met the young traveller's gaze. On the right stretched the graceful curve of Garden Reach, lined with Palladian villas, and as yet unspoilt by the surroundings of the Hugli Docks. Westwards his eye wandered to the vivid foliage of the far-famed Botanical Gardens, to rest anon on the shining river, its broad bosom chequered by tier on tier of the finest sailing-craft in the world. Then, as he drove across Calcutta's playground, known as the Maidan, he saw on one side the frowning embrasures of Fort William, perhaps the largest and certainly the costliest of citadels, and opposite it the long succession of stately houses which have given Calcutta its hackneyed sobriquet. The imposing vista was closed by the dome and far-stretching wings of Government House. Our Eastern metropolis is, like Washington, a city of magnificent distances, and the contrast they present with the cramped environments of boardship life is apt to stir the most sluggish blood. On Hunter the first view of this Mecca of so many ardent vows produced an effect akin to intoxication. "Dearest lady," he wrote :—

TO MISS MURRAY.

November 13, 1862.

Imagine to yourself all the glories of the richest summer month in England combined with the beauties of your own spring. Imagine a landscape of the most lovely green; forests interspersed with open glades, magnificent country mansions, a broad sail-dotted river, which mirrors a sky of the deepest blue. Imagine a city of marble palaces, with regal parks, gardens and clusters of trees, from the midst of which church spires and a solemn cathedral soar heavenwards. Imagine, in short, everything that is glorious in nature combined with all that is beautiful in architecture, and you



can faintly picture to yourself what Calcutta is in this month of November.

A knowledge of the less obvious sides of Mr. Kipling's "City of Dreadful Night" was destined to bring disillusion. Those stucco mansions were unprovided with drainage or pure water, and served as a screen for a congeries of festering slums which after the lapse of forty years still defies the sanitary reformer.

TO MISS MURRAY.

November 14, 1862.

I charge you to dismiss all anxieties about me from your fluttering heart. Poor Uncle James has had to go home on sick-leave. Well, when my parents speak about it, by all means sympathise as much as you please, but do not believe a word against the climate of Bengal till you hear it from my own lips. Most young men, even among the moral sort, use up their allowance of life and animal energies in a way which to me is frightful. Believe me that the ordinary wear and tear of a man who lives without care or study is beyond all proportion greater than that of the hardest reader. You used to think, when I came out, pale and sick from overwork, to Colinton, that I was impairing my constitution. I assure you I would rather work nineteen hours per diem for a month than spend two evenings after the fashion of my friends. Mothers and sisters have no idea how young men with money live. This morning half-a-dozen of my set had a more or less severe attack of dysentery. They are all cursing the climate, and no doubt will write home by this mail saying that they feel so horribly seedy in this city that they are going up country immediately. Now what is the plain English of all this? Simply, that after a tiffin, consisting of soup, two or three kinds of meat with an immense heap of curry, no end of fruit, with beer and sherry *ad lib.*, they went to the cricket-ground and played for three hours in the burning sun. Dinner lasted from 7.30 till nearly midnight—ice- pudding with champagne. Then, till 2 A.M., they played a wild game of loo, and thereafter they sallied forth in search of adventure and drove home at five or six in the morning. About eleven o'clock most of them woke with a feeling as if their stomachs had been rolled up in a very tight ball and well sat upon. When I say that I have no fears whatever of the climate do not think me presumptuous. God only knows what He has in store for me. Life and death are in His hands; but here, as at home, He gives over most of our destiny to ourselves. Against epidemics there are two grand although not always certain safeguards—a thoroughly vigorous tone of body and plenty of intellectual interests. Do not judge of me by what you saw in England. Now there is a vigour



in my step, a wild flush of blood upon my cheeks, and a sense of joyous independence in my every action that I never knew before.

On 16th November he moved from his hotel to a boarding-house at 3 Middleton Street, and settled down to a course of intensely hard study. In those days a budding civilian was detained in Calcutta until he had passed examinations in Urdu and Bengali qualifying him for the public service, and was then posted to a station in the interior. The routine was a relic of a system introduced early in the century by the Marquis of Wellesley, which he hoped would convert the raw material provided by jobbing East Indian Directors into efficient members of the governing class. With this object he founded a college where young writers, as they were called, were trained in Eastern languages and law; and thence they passed out with more or less *éclat* at the termination of a two years' course of study. Calcutta a century ago was even less suited to wild young blood than in the present year of grace. Its climate stimulates while it enfeebles the bodily powers; and many a writer began his official life with a broken constitution and a load of debt, the fruit of senseless extravagance. And so Lord Wellesley's imposing foundation, with its staff of learned professors, its speech-days on the Etonian model, vanished into thin air; and its local habitation, still known as Writers' Buildings, forms the shell of the Bengal Secretariat on the north side of Dalhousie Square. The whole system finally disappeared not long after Hunter's time, and young civilians are now sent off to their appointed stations within a few days of their arrival. It is a moot point whether the pendulum has not swung too far in the opposite direction. English lads fresh from the joys of university life suffer most acutely in the petty and rather squalid surroundings of the provinces, and others who have not had the advantage of Oxford or Cambridge training no longer have the opportunity of gaining the social polish which a metropolis affords. Hunter's resolves at the very outside of his career in India were characteristic. They were to pass the qualifying examination in the shortest possible time, and to win as many as he could of the pecuniary prizes, which then, as now, rewarded special proficiency in languages. On 14th November he had a glimpse



of the higher administration which evidently impressed him deeply. Through the kindness of his fellow-passenger, Mr. Charles Wingfield, he was bidden to breakfast by Mr. E. C. Bayley, Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*November 16, 1862.*

I found with them a native of rank, talking about the foreclosure of mortgages. Mr. Wingfield urged the general justice of the English system; the Indian pleaded lucidly the injustice to individuals arising from the law of foreclosure. Mr. Bayley did not say much, but evidently held Mr. Wingfield's views. He is a slightly bald, benevolent-looking man of fifty-eight, and has more direct patronage than any other person in India. The native was the illustrious Dinkar Rao, Prime Minister of the Maharaja Scindia, a man to whom we owe the safety of our Indian Empire. At the greatest personal risk he frustrated his monarch's designs against us by delays, and when he could put off no longer he gave our men at Agra due warning of the approach of his master's army. After he had left the two gentlemen talked over certain proposed reductions in the police force of a great province. Bayley had to discuss it in Council the same afternoon, and seemed anxious to get Wingfield to consent to a reduction from 8000 men to 5000. Wingfield summed up thus—"Reduction is all very well, but there is a point beyond which is ruin. True, the men will not desert, because they can get no other employment at present. But overwork these natives and they will become discontented, and I would rather govern without a police force than with a mutinous one."

The succeeding letters to Miss Murray are full of human interest. They record, fresh from his busy brain, the impressions made on the Scottish lad by the brilliant society to which his official rank proved an open sesame; and the haunting charm of the East, heightened by contrast with European ideals. His hopes, ambitions, fears, all find a record in these pages, whose faded ink and crumbling texture seem to thrill with the writer's vitality. Much of their contents is too sacred for the public eye; but enough may be given here to portray the effect on Hunter's mental growth produced by his new environment.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*December 6, 1862.*

From ten to two I generally read very closely, but three days a week I drive out to make calls at 11.30 and return at one. No one



is received after two o'clock; people have tiffin at that hour, and are invisible till they appear on the Course between five and six. All my friends live in and around Chowringhee, and our house is in the very centre of that fashionable quarter, so that with the aid of my quick-paced mare I can make six or eight visits in one and a half hours. After tiffin comes the moonshee. I trust you observed my discreet silence upon the subject of moonshees in the former letter, when I had to mention our morning lessons from that venerable instructor. My reason is similar to that which the great Dr. Arnold assigns for passing over in silence one of the wars between Spain and Rome—I, at that time, knew very little about the subject. But, my dear, time works wonders and overturns dynasties, so in three weeks and two days I have got an insight into the habits and natural history of the animal called a moonshee.

Syed Tufuzzul Hossein, the specimen which the writer has domesticated, is one of the most respectable of his order. Sprung from the haughty Syeds of Arabia, his ancestors emigrated with their swords and four wives apiece to Delhi, engaged in the service of the monarch, took unto themselves other wives and concubines without number, and did likewise everything else which marks a successful Moslem family. Three hundred years ago the progenitor of the specimen in possession of the author was appointed Cazi, or Judge of the Twenty Four Pergunnahs, a large district in the immediate vicinity of Calcutta, and accordingly came down to live here, carrying with him Arab horses, Cashmir shawls, one or two law books, and the aforesaid wives, &c., without number. Here the venerable Cazi and all the little prospective Cazis lived in the patriarchal style, took bribes, and dispensed justice, and were gathered to their fathers, until we found it expedient to take possession of the country and appoint a civilian judge with £3000 or £4000 a year. Hence the dispossessed myrmidon of Themis became a moonshee, and likewise have all his children, each in their turn, unto this present day. Now, of moonshees there are divers types, whereof these two are chief (1) the Village Moonshee, who is paid to teach village children, and who sleeps over his books; and (2) the College Moonshee, who is paid to teach civilians, and who sleeps over his books. Our man is the author of two or three popular works and a grammar; he is likewise member of various learned societies, a good Mussulman, and a very handsome man of five-and-fifty. He really is anxious to help me. I like him very much, and when he takes a nod over his book (which is never more than once in four or five days), my only reproof is to put my mouth close to his ear and suddenly wake him with a loud English laugh. He believes in Genii, but admits that these are only to be met in parts of the world where no one has ever been. He is an educated man, and the only *terra*



*incognita* to him is inland from the Cape of Good Hope. Brett's table-servant has never been out of Bengal, so he believes that all the rest of the world is more or less thickly peopled with Genii. My servant is a North-West man, and has been in China, so that the known world is rather a larger thing to him. He, therefore, places the kingdom of the Genii to the north of the Himalayas, where his *terra incognita* begins. My moonshee looks upon the Mohammedan faith as the legitimate and formally prophesied dispensation which was to succeed the Jewish. He is full of traditional learning, and is a most gentlemanly, agreeable man. His costume consists outwardly of a voluminous piece of muslin, which he rolls round and round his body, and then arranges in such a way as to cover his legs and come down to his ankles, and yet allow him to walk almost as easily as trousers would. On the top of this, as it is winter, he wears a handsome Cashmir shawl arranged over his shoulders in a compromise between a Highland plaid and a Roman toga. This he never takes off in the house, nor yet his turban of finely embroidered muslin, thirty yards of which are rolled round his head. He wears red Turkish slippers and no socks, and sports a very seedy-looking buggy, drawn by an overworked horse. Two teeth alone adorn his upper jaw, and he is subject to attacks of dysentery and of having female relatives married in his house.

In spite of hours spent in the study of the difficult vernacular of Bengal, Hunter found time for society.

TO MISS MURRAY.

December 8, 1862.

I landed without an introduction, but I have as many engagements as I can manage. . . . On Tuesday I dine with one of the Secretaries; on Thursday I breakfast with Mr. Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. On Friday there is a musical soiree at a big civilian's. Next day I lunch with an indigo planter, and on Monday I dine with one of the Judges of the Supreme Court.

John Bright defined happiness as "congenial occupation, with a sense of progress." Hunter had both at this time, and his natural exultation breaks out in the next letter.

TO MISS MURRAY.

December 9, 1862.

I wrote you ever so many pages yesterday, and here I am at the old trick again. The truth is, dear, it is my only-luxury. When I am in that happy exuberant frame of mind which in



England would have sent me running out to you at Colinton, here I sit down and write you a couple of pages. My sweet Jessie, will you have the goodness this beautiful morning to turn up the *Almanach de Gotha*, and carefully look over the list of all the crowned heads in that useful repertory? If you find any one among them who has a lighter heart, a clearer head, or a more joyous step than your dear boy, I promise to pay in five pence, in his name, to your account at your banker's. If God gives us health and long life together, we shall be rich, very rich, before we are fifty. I mean three or four thousand a year from our savings and my pension. Let us be thankful to Heaven for its mercies. Dearest, I read the Psalms appointed for each morning and evening of the month over every day, so that each month I go through the whole book of Psalms. I find that religion is compatible with every taste I have got. Perhaps I am not strict enough, for with me religion is a warm, sunny thing. It curtails not one of my enjoyments, and gives me some which I could not have without it.

Hunter had no trace of the sporting instinct, that survival of ages when man subsisted on prey slaughtered by his bow and spear. He admitted that it was a force to be reckoned with in human nature, a taste to be indulged in with due moderation. For otherwise the country side would be deserted by a class whose influence makes for good, and who gain health and sympathy for those about them from the joys of the chase. His breadth of view, too, led him to admit that there was something to be said for sport even from its victim's point of view. While walking one afternoon in the early autumn of 1898 in Lord Abingdon's glorious woods behind Oaken Holt, he observed a cock-pheasant rise in a flash of brilliant colour at their feet, and remarked, "Now, is it not well that these creatures should have a few months of happy life, even though death come to them in their prime? They owe their very existence to the shooting craze. But for it they would have been exterminated ages ago."

This is a question of casuistry which it would be difficult to solve. Though Hunter was a capital horseman he seldom rode to hounds; nor was he ever known to draw trigger on fur or feather. This antipathy for certain forms of sport was the outcome of his deep-seated love of animals, and it filled him with disgust for the poor imitation of fox-hunting afforded by the suburbs of Calcutta. He thus describes his only experience of jackal-killing:—



To MISS MURRAY.

December 18, 1862.

After leaving this delightful region of gardens and palaces our way lay for a couple of miles through the native town: a long street with low dingy huts of mud and matting on either side and at intervals a tank with bright green banks and a lofty, pillared Public Office overlooking it. At last we crossed a canal which surrounds the city. On either side of the road were thick bamboo-jungle, tufted cocoanut trees, huge broad-leaved plantains, and every variety of palm, from the brightest green to the richest yellow. Every now and then we would catch a glimpse of a white mansion ornamented with the invariable fluted pillars, and a broad white flight of steps descending to the tank in front. We see these houses every day and live in them, still when seen through wide-leaved palm trees I can never help thinking of enchanted castles, so white are they, so spacious, so silent. In Bengal every scene looks like a picture out of the Arabian Nights. Then away through the level country: the paddy fields covered with reapers, and young green crops growing in the next meadow (here Nature never rests). Suddenly the road seemed to become one vast moving hay-stack. In a moment or two we came upon the cause in a line of bullocks completely covered with huge piles of hay and extending half a mile in length. We felt like Macbeth when he beheld Birnam Wood advancing towards Dunsinane. Be sure the drivers gave us plenty of space, most unnecessarily driving their patient beasts into the ditch. They guide the bullocks by twisting their tails, just as we steer a ship by its rudder. Before half-past seven we were at Dum Dum, and landed at a bungalow full of young civilians who keep house together. The first thing on arriving at a house in India is to be offered something to eat and drink. I had a cup of tea, two slices of toast, and a lot of oranges and plantains. By eight o'clock six Arabs were at the door. These we mounted and started on a jackal-hunt, in this wise. Imprimis, before you hunt your jackal, it is necessary first to catch him in a brick trap with two doors, about the size of a rabbit-hutch. Next morning you place a thick sack of jute-canvas at one door, open it from above and stir the brute up from the other, with the help of a long bamboo. In he goes into the sack, the mouth of which is securely tied, and he is placed in a buggy and follows the huntsmen to the Maidan, a great common to be found at every Indian station. Mr. Jackal gets a hundred yards start, and is hunted by only one dog at a time. The hound of to-day was very big, and soon overtook him. Now came the sport. The jackal turned to bay with his mouth open towards the dog, and slowly retreated backwards towards the wood which surrounds the Maidan a couple of miles off. Our dog was plucky, so in a minute the blood was oozing from five or six places in his body. From this



he learnt wisdom, and by feigned fear he tried to tempt the jackal into turning tail and sneaking for the wood. Whenever Jacky tried this the dog—Bevis by name—pounced on his neck. The battle was pretty equal for about half-an-hour, Jacky gradually nearing the wood, and getting a worry now and then till he was driven into one of the tanks which adorn the Maidan. Here the dog caught him and held his head under water. We made him fetch him out and leave hold; gave him half-an-hour's rest, and then another hundred yards start, and so the hunt went on. He got twice worried before he reached the deep ditch separating the Maidan from the wood. Here the final fight took place. At last it became painful. Bevis had a bad bite in his jaw, so that whenever he got hold of Jacky, the latter seemed to bleed too, though he was hardly hurt. Accordingly we called Bevis off, and sent him home in the buggy to get his wounds seen to by the doctor, and ordered a servant to put Jacky out of his pain, by smashing his head with a club. It is poor, pitiful sport, and too cruel for me by far.

*Paullo majora canemus* is the strain of the next letter which I shall quote:—

TO MISS MURRAY.

December 17, 1862.

I suppose you would like to know something about the present condition of this country and of the services which govern and protect it, so I will devote part of my letters to the humble programme of my daily life and part to some account of the great moving causes which are at this moment changing the face of this beautiful land. The one vital duty of a Government is to give absolute security from foreign enemies and from internal wrong-doers. To this end the central force keeps an army and a police. These are the only essential limbs of a Government. Judges and lawyers come practically under the head of police; financiers and tax-gatherers are merely accidental, though absolutely necessary appendages. They do not govern, they only enable the others to govern by feeding them while so doing. It is the troops that fight the enemy; but how would the troops show in the day of battle were it not for the humble sutler who follows and feeds them? Those big financiers, among whom we long so much to see my name enrolled, are merely Imperial sutlers who do for the nation what the commissariat does for the camp. Secretaries of State and Legislative Councillors are aids to the two great arms of Government, the army and the police. They are the head; it is the duty of the head to shorten and lighten the work of the arms. Prevention is better than cure, so it is better to have foreign Secretaries to prevent collisions with foreign Powers than to humble the foreign Powers themselves after a quarrel. In



the same way it is found that good laws do much to decrease the number of crimes; therefore it is cheaper to keep half-a-dozen highly paid legislators to save the subject from becoming criminal than to maintain an extra couple of thousand policemen to catch and punish the criminal after he has become so. Kings, Ministers of State, Secretaries, Governors, and Viceroy, these are mostly names given to the officers who regulate and adjust the relations of the civil to the military power, and of these united powers to the tax-paying subject. So much for my view of Government in general. It deals with Government only in a material English aspect, its moral aspect need not be even glanced at, as I do not require it for what is to follow. I must repeat to you, however, what I have often said that in cases of a despotic *régime*, where the Government stands on a much higher intellectual level than the governed, the central power should not only protect, but also instruct. After protection, but remember only after it, comes instruction. Now for particulars: and, first, about the military arm. How is it that India, which never had a single moment's repose for sixteen long centuries, now enjoys the profoundest peace? I mean what I say, I assert that since the third century of our era not a day has passed in which there has not been war somewhere or other between Travancore and the sources of the Ganges. How is it, then, that all of a sudden this wild tumult subsides, that the mountain bands never descend upon the plain, that the husbandman of the plain casts his paddy-seed upon the water-flooded field in the perfect security that he will reap it after many days? Dynasty has succeeded dynasty, successive waves have overtopped the Himalayas, and conquered for themselves a home in the Land of Promise below, but no dynasty has been strong enough to say "let there be peace and there was peace," no wave has been deep and wide enough to submerge the countless rebel Rajahs of Hindustan or the legion of marauding bands in Southern India. Here we Englishmen stand on the face of the broad earth, a scanty pale-faced band in the midst of three hundred millions of unfriendly vassals. On their side is a congenial climate and all the advantages which home and birthplace can give; on ours long years of exile, a burning sun which dries up the Saxon energies, home sickenings, thankless labour, disease and oftentimes death far from wife, child, friend, or kinsman. How is it that these pale-cheeked exiles give security to a race of another hue, other tongues, other religions which rulers of their own people have ever failed to give? Dearest, there are unseen moral causes which I need not point out to my little student of Martineau. The obvious material cause is our Anglo-Indian army. Our army here is the engine by which we keep India. Other rulers of India have had as numerous armies, where is the difference?



Armed men in great bodies, to be useful, must be kept in the position of servants. Hence they must be paid by the person who wishes to be their master. To be paid, it is requisite that there should be sufficient revenues. To raise sufficient revenues, it is necessary to have a wise system of taxation and skilful internal administration. It is precisely this that India never had under her native rulers. Therefore the taxes were deficient; therefore the army had to be provided for by grants of land to generals who raised troops in their own name, paid them with their own land, and were ever ready to assert their own independence at the expense of the central power. In short, the army was a source of profitless foreign wars and internal revolutions. Its nominal magnitude continually tempted the monarch to ruinous encroachments on his neighbours; its real insubordination brought about every two or three centuries one of those changes of dynasty which superficial historians look upon as the essence of Indian history. Revolutions are good landmarks, that is all; but surely the essential part in describing a country is not to recount only the measurements between the landmarks, and the height and breadth and colour of these landmarks, but to show what grew in the field between, and to give us pictures, according to the traveller's ability, of the mountains, rivers, plains, the giant trees, little flowers, and singing-birds. The first great difference, then, between the army in English and in native times is that in the latter it consisted of a number of land-holders who united their retainers for longer or shorter time under the command of the central power. In English times every soldier, from the sepoy to Sir Hugh Rose,<sup>1</sup> is and feels himself to be the servant of one master, the monarch, and receives his pay from one source, the public purse. This is the highest effort of centralisation, to keep large bodies of armed men as a security against aggressors, and yet to be in perfect safety from the evil attempts of its defenders. India is a conquered country. Our Government has to protect itself from its own subjects. It would be impossible to keep a sufficient number of English troops in India, even if England would submit to such a drain upon her resources. The difficulty is solved by drawing all the dead-weight from our Indian subjects, and all the directing power from England. The hands and feet and carcase are Indian; the swift eye and discerning brain are English. The new Indian army consists of 80,000 English troops and 260,000 native. The English element consists of ordinary British regiments who are taking their term of ten years' duty in India just as they would take it in any other British colony. The native troops are generally enlisted on the fierce and hardy north-west frontier, are disciplined exactly like English troops, and officered by English-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Hugh Henry Rose, afterwards Field-Marshal, and Baron Strathnairn of Strathnairn and Jansi (1801-85), was then Commander-in-Chief in India.



men. Our great mistake before 1857 was to permit the native troops to feel that it was they that kept India for us, and not we ourselves. Now we have the artillery in the hands of Englishmen, and we have a force of English troops in the country sufficient, with the aid of railroads, telegraphs, and the moral support of Government, to checkmate any native combination which could be set on foot. When the railway system is completed the efficiency of our English troops will be increased twenty-fold, and besides this, the growth of commerce and internal wealth which railways foster will be of itself a better security for the stability of our Indian Empire than all the legions of England and all her batteries of Lancaster guns. It is something for posterity to wonder at, our scheme of keeping India, not by the strength of our right hands, not by scourging with whips and scorpions, but by making the people who rebelled against us bless the day we conquered them.

On New Year's Day he burst forth into raptures inspired by the glorious but all too brief Indian winter, and alluded to one advantage which the East offers to Englishmen—the absence of those carking pecuniary cares which beset the threshold of most professional careers at home. “The scaffolding of life,” to use one of Sir M. E. Grant-Duff's happy expressions, gives but little trouble in India, and one's whole faculties are, or should be, focused on the complicated task of administration.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*January 1, 1863.*

This is a wonderful land, whose sun rises and sets every day in unclouded splendour. I never understood before how much merely fine weather can do to make life enjoyable. A bright, fresh morning and a calm, lovely evening—these are blessings which every one here assumes as a matter of right, and never thinks of being grateful for. The theory of existence in India seems to be that the conquerors are so profoundly immersed in the cares of government that they must be relieved of all the little domestic offices which they perform for themselves at home. It is for this reason, I suppose, that no one is able to dress himself, or to shave, or to tie his shoe-latchets. I confess, however, that the solution becomes strained when we apply it to the wonderful phenomenon that no Englishman here seems capable of pulling on his own socks. From the very first no one knows how many servants he has; they appear, noiseless and respectful for a moment, perform their special office, and are no more heard. The headman pays them, screwing each one of them down to the smallest number of rupees per mensem.



*January 4, 1863.*

I am so happy, thinking of you. I lay down my book, choose one of your photographs, put it in one of my loose shooting coat pockets, and step out into the moonlit compound. Oh, what a moonlight! The sky is one vast dome of blue light round the moon, shading darker and darker towards the circumference, but always and everywhere blue, not black. The pale, dim stars are hardly visible amid the general splendour. How I delight to pace up and down the centre walk of our garden, the stately white house at one end, the glistening sheet of water at the other (we should call it a good-sized lake, were it in a park at home), the drooping, delicate-leaved trees shadowing the walk, and their giant brothers circling the whole lovely scene with masses of thick dark foliage. Dearest, at every two or three turns I pause at the flight of steps which lead down to the tank, take out your photograph, and gaze on it ever so many minutes. I never knew that I could have such perfect delight without your sweet presence before. There I stand in the bright moonlight, now gazing on your face, now looking down on the motionless white lake, now turning to the snowy mansion behind, then up to the blue sky. No vulgar sound interrupts me; only the faint, mellow notes of the Evening Hymn which some lady is singing in our house. Sweet, when I think how perfectly happy I am my heart feels quite humble, and then when I remember the frequent levities, and occasional faults much worse than levities, of the past week, a petition comes to my lips about leading a "godly, sober, and righteous life." For all this happiness I have to thank you. You have given me a little fairyland to which I am continually going on furlough. Be sure, you are always with me on these trips.

Hunter's first glimpse of a State entertainment is next described as only he could describe it :—

TO MISS MURRAY.

*January 18, 1863.*

No Governor-General has ever been a gayer old gentleman than Lord Elgin,<sup>1</sup> and after a winter of balls, dinners, &c., the

<sup>1</sup> James Bruce, eighth Earl of Elgin and twelfth of Kincardine, was born in 1811, and was, therefore, in his fifty-second year. After governing Jamaica and Canada with success, he went as Plenipotentiary to China to settle the rupture brought about by the *Lorch Arrow* incident already referred to. On his way thither he learnt from Lord Canning that the Bengal army had mutinied, and diverted to Calcutta the entire force destined for China, thus contributing materially to the suppression of the rising. Pushing on alone to China, he succeeded, by a rare display of firmness and diplomacy, in inducing the umbrageous Celestials to enter into a treaty of peace and



Autocrat determined to give an entertainment which should be historical, before starting on his tour to visit a few of his four hundred million subjects. During the present reign Government has been in such strong and competent hands that the monarch has plenty of time to devote to court pastimes. The invitations were issued four months ago; every one who has the entrée of Government House was asked, and as each mail deposited its passengers, cards were sent to those whose rank entitled them to be present at such festivities. In short, half official India was there, and the heads of the great mercantile community. The papers say that 1700 invitations were issued, and one of the Vice-roy's aides, who does all the court ball invitations, told me afterwards that at least 1200 were present. As four to five months' notice had been given, most people got their fancy-dresses from London, Paris, or Madrid. Some came from Rome, one from St. Petersburg, and several from America. Cairo sent three, and one man told me that his had been made in the bazaar of Damascus. People were—shall we say extravagant or liberal? Many ladies tell me theirs will cost £100, and I know one man who certainly will not get off under that sum. As a rule they cost from £25 to £70, though a dress at £50 would be noticeable for its handsomeness. For some time past Calcutta has been a big milliner's shop, and all the ladies have been little else than modistes. It was quite unsafe for a man to enter female society unless he was able to tell whether green looked well upon purple, or whether in "our" quadrille the ladies were to go in powder or not. A book of costumes was to a lady's man what *First Principles* are to a Scotch metaphysician. I used to declare that I would not call on people unless I had at least four volumes of my illustrated Shakespeare in my buggy. Indeed these little books have been very useful to myself and others. The pangs which even men endured in the noble cause of costume prove that martyrs will be found for any movement. Who does not know how one of our sweet Royal Sisters burned good people for wishing to lay aside the friar's frock, and the other burned them for wishing to put it on again! My forte does not lie in that way, so I put myself in the best tailor's hands, and left my cause with him. I was rather lucky. A lot of dresses came out unexpectedly last mail after everybody was supplied, so Mr. Snip was only too glad to get one of the handsomest off his hands for half the price he

amity with us. Then he turned his attention to Japan, and paved the way for the bloodless revolution which afterwards opened that Empire to Western trade. On his return to England he was appointed to succeed Lord Canning as Viceroy of India; and had he lived to complete his term of office he would have left a mark there as enduring as that of any predecessor. Barely ten months after Hunter obtained this glimpse of a great personality it passed away for ever. Lord Elgin was one of the many victims of the Indian climate encountered too late in life. He succumbed to heart disease, during a progress through the Punjab, on 20th November 1863.



would have asked for it while the fever was at its height. I went as a Spanish courtier of high rank, and am in no way responsible for the magnificence, and no doubt the anachronisms of the costume. All my friends complimented me on my brilliant appearance—which compliments I take all the more kindly, as I do not deserve the credit for slyness and secrecy which they are pleased to give me. In truth, my costume only came home the evening before the ball. But I was not without trepidation. It is easy to put stockings on, but how is a man to keep them up? I luckily thought of garters, and tied them up very tight with the red tape which I use for official documents. Major Burne<sup>1</sup> looked me over and saw that all was *comme il faut*: I felt easy enough in the dress as I had dined in it, but those dreadful stockings, and the vision of endless steps to climb to the ballroom! Burne and I overhauled them on our way to Government House, for the ladies went each in a separate carriage, and we two together. You may be sure he chaffed me unmercifully about them; at every step it seemed as if the stockings were slipping through the garters. However, once on level ground, my anxieties were over: I forgot all about them, and danced every dance till I left at two next morning. At a quarter to ten the band played "God save the Queen," the drawing-room doors were thrown open, a procession was formed, and we all filed in at one door, passing Lord and Lady Elgin on their dais, each one making the bow suitable to his costume, and out by the other door. The Mousquetaires and other Spanish dancers formed immediately in the railed-off space, where we had plenty of room to dance in, while outside all was confusion. However, many went away in an hour, and by twelve o'clock there was room for everybody. Of all the Calcutta ladies I admire Mrs. O—— most. Exceedingly pretty to my taste, with a pale high forehead, and a certain *grande taille* in all her movements. She is by far the most intellectual woman I know here, and has that strong, confiding ambition for her husband which is the chief charm of a high-bred English lady. She was dressed exactly as I should fancy such a woman would be dressed. Abundant hair built up and powdered high over her forehead, a rich black velvet robe over her marriage white silk—that was all. I ought to have described Mrs. O—— before, and it has occurred to me that hitherto I had neglected to do so. Do you suppose that Mrs. O—— is a good manager and so forth? Very probably she does not know the name of any one of her servants. Some ladies poke into these matters, but I am certain that in India, where a head-servant manages all household affairs, a woman can do more to help her husband on in life by uttering three ambitious sentences a week than by scrutinising the bazaar accounts every day

<sup>1</sup> Now General Sir Owen Tudor Burne, G.C.I.E. His friendship with Hunter continued unbroken for thirty-seven years.



for a month. It is an easy matter to save rupees here, but difficult enough to save yourself from forgetting that beyond your little official duties there are great political problems to be dealt with and solved. There is such a delicious languor in a land "where all things seem the same" that it requires far deeper intellectual ambitions, and a far greater sense of duty than I had thought, to resist the charms of this lotus-eating life. A wife may save as many rupees as she chooses, but I protest that unless she does her best to remind her husband of the great living world outside she is not a whit better than his cheroots.

Mr. and Mrs. O—— are kinspeople of Lord Elgin, and Mrs. O—— was one of the semi-circle of ladies who attended her Ladyship. I was leaning over her chair, and apropos of some satirical remark she had made about mature matrons of five-and-forty still insisting upon dancing, I was asking her to prescribe some lotion for my arm which I had a moment ago sprained in whirling a particularly plump and aged partner round the room, when suddenly I saw her face become grave. She rose majestically, and, raising my head, I saw that his Excellency had come up and was shaking hands with her. I fell back a pace or two and stood respectfully silent till the interview was over. Lord Elgin is a plump, fresh-complexioned, white-haired little gentleman of about fifty-eight, with a ready smile for everybody and his hand for all those who are entitled to it. Not a man who could invent, but certainly one who could execute. One whom you could guess dealt with life in detail, as he built up the Chinese Treaty, clause by clause. The very last person in the world that you would choose if you had anything to do in the deception department, but precisely the companion for a morning's ride or a talk after dinner. Very gallant to ladies, too, I assure you. I do not know whether I read all this in his round Scotch face, or in his past history. Not an intellectual face certainly, but rather a hard-working, common-sense one. When you meet a great man once or twice in his easy moments and yet remain an utter stranger to him and have no opportunity of hearing him talk upon those subjects in which he is great, it is very hard to prevent yourself from feeling disappointed. Yet that short, white-haired gentleman who is making such surmises about the mosquitoes coming in at the open windows and eating up the ladies at supper, and who is telling how Lady Elgin got so fearfully bitten that even on the morning of the ball she did not know if she could appear—that rosy-cheeked Scotch country magnate who is smiling from ear to ear at something funny he has just said, is by far the ablest colonial Governor and the greatest negotiator with uncivilised nations that the British Crown has ever possessed. He is also ruler of the most extensive Empire that ever obeyed one man. It seems difficult to take it all in of this kindly plump face, but so it is. There—he has made his bow, the stars and decorations turn



away, Mrs. O—— sits down, the lancers strike up, and she and I hurry to the next room before our *vis-à-vis* gets into despair and takes in a new couple. Then there is that most charming of all dances—the fifth set. Meanwhile his Excellency is talking again about the mosquitoes coming in at the open windows, and Lady Elgin bows smilingly to Mrs. Seton-Karr who is standing beside a pillar and watching the dance.

A week later Hunter recurs to the beautiful Mrs. O——'s ambition:—

To MISS MURRAY.

January 25, 1863.

Now that the excitement of landing in a new country and meeting for the first time with a new order of things is over, I am able to look about me and form my plan of life. Dearest, I know you will not refuse to spare me time to work at what I think it is my duty to do. I know it is much pleasanter for a wife, particularly in this country, to have a gentle, easy-going husband, who does not exhaust his energies by working out of the ordinary routine, but devotes his whole leisure to her. I admit that a wife has a greater claim upon her husband's time in India, where she has a more limited female circle to choose her friends from, than in England, but you know what my tastes are and you know there is but one way to realise our ambitions—by working harder than other men. Dearest, perhaps at present, when you are far away and would be delighted and thankful to have me beside you even five minutes a day, you may think that it is no great thing I am asking for—a right over my leisure hours; but when we are married you will find out that it is so. It is something dreadful to contemplate the evil influence some married women have over their husbands in this country. Men, who among men display all the powers which usually result in independent action, spend their lives here and leave no traces behind them. In a country where there is no public and where Government is simply a profession, no lasting fame can be gained by one of the ruling body—except the very highest—just as no lasting fame is made by a lawyer or doctor by his strictly professional labours. They may make a reputation—that is all. But if the lawyer wishes to make “his name flutter on the lips of men,” it will not be by chamber practice or pleadings in court—it will be by study and reflection. The present claims the whole day, and if we wish to make ourselves a future it must be made after the day's work is done. Why do not the various Secretaries do something lasting? Because they are married, my dear. The lady is tired of the long day's idleness, and her husband must amuse her by conversation or backgammon all the evening, or, though he detests dancing, he must put on his regimentals and go with her to a ball. Thank Heaven, all our English women in this country are not the same.



It is a dreadful fate—that of a woman who takes away her husband's chance of greatness.

Thus the claims of society were never permitted to interfere with his daily work; and on 2nd January 1863 he became qualified for further service by passing an initial examination in the vernacular. In his intercourse with the teachers who enabled him to satisfy this test, he showed an instinctive sympathy for the cause of literature.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*February 3, 1863.*

I buy new works written by natives on principle. My moonshée and pundit have standing orders to get me all Oriental books as they come out. I consider this a part of my duty. It is useless talking of the poverty of a country's literature unless you do your best to encourage men of letters by buying their works. I have impressed this on my chum Gribble,<sup>1</sup> and though he has no intention of ever reading such books, he is good enough to take copies.

I have been so busy to-day that I have not been out of my room since 7.30 A.M. It is glorious, the enjoyment of working. I feel as happy after such a day as I do in very jovial company when we have all drunk enough to make us very merry. It is a wild exhilaration, precisely like that which wine produces. To-night I have not had time to go into dinner, but do not pity me because I did not choose to sit an hour and a half over soup, fish, entrées, roasts, game, salad, cheese, pudding, and dessert, which is our regular evening meal in this house. I am in such capital health and spirits that I cannot help feeling happy. By the way, I had a narrow escape yesterday. I was looking at the various horses in the stable, and, seeing a stranger, I went up to pat and stroke her. The brute was a vicious country-bred mare. As soon as I got to her head she tried to bite, and immediately turned half round in order to plant a kick in my stomach as I was leaving the stall. I noticed her little game, and kept stroking her shoulders, safe from her mouth and heels. Then I got gradually down to her flanks, and to this moment I do not know exactly how I got any farther. I remember seeing the leg raised to kick out, catching it with both hands on the sinew just above the knee, being jerked a couple of paces backwards out of the stall, and, perfectly unhurt, seeing the heavy heel in the air, while I was in safety beyond its reach. Such a kick usually lands in the ribs or stomach of a man of my size. Had I got it I should have been buried this morning.

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Thomas Gribble of the Bengal Civil Service was a contemporary and a close friend of Hunter's. He is described in a letter to Miss Murray as "a handsome, agreeable man," and my own recollection calls up a charm of manner such as few possess.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE END OF A GREAT FINANCIER

A TENDER love idyll now intervened to give a new current to Hunter's thoughts and call a truce to schemes for fame and happiness. Among his intimates was a young army doctor, Leonard L—— by name, who was engaged to be married to Miss Hetty D——, a gentle little lass who belonged to the Murrays' home circle. On 10th February 1863 she arrived in Calcutta by steamer to wed her lover.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*February 11, 1863.*

Poor little Hetty. This is the first wet day we have had since I landed, and she is to arrive on it. Instead of gliding up the beautiful river under the steamer's awning, every one bright and happy, and the luggage piled on deck for the customs examination, the passengers will be crowded together in a hot, damp cabin, with boxes in their way, and every one excessively ill-tempered.

I called this morning on Mrs. Mackenzie, the wife of Leonard's Brigadier, with whom Hetty is to stay till the knot is tied, and found the lady of the house chatting with beautiful Mrs. E——, but no Hetty. Presently Mrs. Mackenzie looked significantly towards the next room, where, through an open door, I saw Leonard's fine drooping moustaches bending over the back of a sofa, very close to a head which was reclining there. The pair got up and came forward together. What a fairy Leonard will have! Very *petite*, with a gentle, winning face, soft eyes, and a look of clinging, loving dependence. Such a complexion, too! Not high, but fresh and tender as a peach. She is so timid and pretty, poor wee thing. She is like a person thrown overboard, who gets to land, but is not quite sure whether it is really the bottom which her feet are touching.

Mrs. E—— is a fine dashing girl, one of our leading beauties, a charming woman to flirt or waltz with in a fancy dress. She was busy altering the cluster of ostrich feathers which she wore the other day at the Viceroy's Drawing-room. All she cares to talk



about is the local 'gaities—who has jilted, and who is spooning whom, and so forth. She ran on in this style for some time, and I saw poor Hetty looking rather scared, so I said, "I am afraid you will think you have come to a little provincial town, Miss Hetty. We have so few and such private interests. All we want to know is what weddings are in the air, and how lovely Mrs. E—— looked at the Viceregal Court." Indeed I was rather ashamed. Mrs E—— is really a good creature, but has no idea of a delicate nature like Hetty's. The marriage is to come off on Tuesday next, and I am to be the best man.

*February 14, 1863.*

This is the climate for work. A man's peculiarities become wonderfully exaggerated. I do not mean that the passions, as a whole, are more intense, but the ruling passion in an ambitious man at home becomes red-hot out here, and he goes up like a rocket. One who is ordinarily fond of wine in London goes to the deuce in six months in Calcutta; and a racing man, who bets on the Derby only enough to force him to sell his hunter, here goes to work with such energy that he has to dispose of his whole stud before settling-day. A lazy man, who smokes for seven hours a day in the Middle Temple, smokes for seventeen at No. 3 Middleton Street, Calcutta. Call on some fellows at any hour—except feeding time—and you may lay any odds they may be lying in bed, smoking a cheroot and reading a French novel. So, little lady, I love you a hundred times more here than at home (please observe my beautiful analogy!) At any rate I am getting more ambitious. I am perfectly delighted with a country where it is so easy to succeed quickly, and everything depends on one's self.

All really clever men speak well of my uncle, Mr. James Wilson. That is the reputation I should like; but when I see Sir Charles Trevelyan<sup>1</sup> with his red ribbon and golden cross, I hanker after that sort of thing too. I find it will be quite easy to make a great success out here. Only give me fifteen years, give me fifteen years. . . . Fancy, little Hetty gave me a lecture last night. She and Leonard had once or twice spoken about my engagement rather openly. I had always managed to give what

<sup>1</sup> He was a member of the Bengal Civil Service, and entered the Secretariat early in his career. After serving with distinction in the Political Department, he added to his influence by marrying a sister of Lord Macaulay. On his retirement from India in 1840 he became Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, and was the means of our adoption of Competitive Examinations as a test of fitness for the public service. In 1858 he became Governor of Madras, but was recalled two years later for having published a Minute condemning certain of Mr. James Wilson's reforms at a time when the public mind was excited at the prospect of increased taxation. By the irony of fate he was sent out in 1862 to succeed the very man whose policy he had attacked. His intense vigour led him to introduce many useful financial changes, and his entire honesty of purpose won respect from the enemies whom a strong personality always evokes. He died in 1886.



they said a turn of a different meaning, and once whispered to her that I did not wish her to speak of it in public. Thereupon she looked at me with great, wondering eyes, and afterwards told me that she would have been very angry with Leonard if he had kept *his* a secret. One can't explain these matters to gentle little souls like her, but I am sure that you are only too well pleased to know that I would not have it talked about if, by its being noised abroad, we should lose a single chance of getting on.

*February 15, 1863.*

Poor wee Hetty! Leonard was breakfasting with Dr. Duff, who is to do the deed next Tuesday, and, as he lives in some unknown and distant region, I found Hetty waiting disconsolately for him when I called at 11.30. I promised to stay till "he" turned up. Poor thing! in vain did she try to take an interest in a clock which had just come in as a wedding-present and in some shawls which Mrs. Mackenzie was buying from a box-wallah (or pedlar). Every moment she would murmur, "Oh, Mr. Hunter, when *will* my naughty man come?" While speaking she looked at me only half in the face; one eye was always on the curtain which is the only species of door we have here, and one little ear was cocked up like a timid panting fawn's, to catch the first faint sound of his step. It came at last, and I retreated immediately.

*February 20, 1863.*

Little lady, I cannot tell what a strange, painful delight I have in seeing Leonard and Hetty together—pleasure at their happiness, delight at the prospect of the days of bliss that await us, and pain that those days should be so far off. The gentle Hetty! She is a perfect saint, but you suit me better than she would. I require more sympathy in my schemes than she could give. She will make Leonard a pious man, but she could never receive a hundred guests in her house. You see I appreciate her sort of character the more intensely because we are so different. We have the struggle and the pushing and the dust, the long hot trial and, please Heaven, the great success; they will have a little Eden on earth, flowers, green trees, shade, repose, the humming of bees, song of birds, and the sound of rippling brooks. So we two are different from them, but then I think we are so like one another. But you must never let me be too worldly. I know what a temptation it is for the wife to be as the husband is, but I trust that you will always be something higher and better than I can be. I am willing to be good, but I need some one to help me to be so.

*February 24, 1863.*

Now, my little lady wishes to hear all about the wedding yesterday. They are solemn things, such weddings; and I do not like to say much about it just yet. The ceremony was performed



by Dr. Duff at the Scotch Free Church. It was short and affecting. The bride did not cry, but trembled excessively; Leonard behaved as a man worthy of such a gentle soul should—subdued and very grave. I know I laughed at the *déjeuner*, and made other people laugh too, but all the time I felt a strange excitement, as if it were necessary for me to be laughing a good deal or else to burst out crying. I was that way all the afternoon. . . . I had a minute's whisper with Hetty before she went away to change her white frock. I think I must have looked foolish, but my face was turned away from the company. I had no right to be affected, but to see her and Leonard and the rest of them, and to think of the long uncertainties between myself and my Jessie, and of my poor sweet, trembling girl, like our dear bride yesterday, far from her father and mother and her native land, all alone among strangers, giving herself away for life! Of course, I wished her many happy years with Leonard in a grave low tone, and then I was going to whisper something about you but it fairly choked me. I think she knew what I wanted to say, for she turned her soft blue eyes and gave me such a saintly, sympathising look as would of itself have made me regard her as a sister for life.

This episode in Hunter's early career gives the key to many of his idiosyncrasies. The lesson read in gentle Hetty's eyes was not lost upon him. He began to doubt whether worldly success was, after all, the highest aim attainable, and for the first time he looked beyond the narrow sphere of ambition and struggles in which his lot was cast.

TO MISS MURRAY.

March 1, 1863.

It is getting so hot now in the mornings that it is hardly prudent to be out after half-past six. I did not get up till seven this morning, and then I made my servant unpack my white umbrella and walked up and down our own compound under the shady trees. I was very happy; I read the Psalms appointed for this morning and thought of how many good people they had comforted on this the fifth day of each succeeding month. Dearest, I wish you would daily read the Psalms for the morning and evening. Think, as you read them, how many great men have loved to do the same. The pious martyr Latimer, the large-minded political Bishop Cranmer, the statesmen of Elizabeth's time, and that succession of crafty, self-loving public men that made English history during the reigns of Henry the Eighth and his daughter so illustrious. Then the adherents of the fallen Stuart family, in ivied castles, in poverty-stricken and decaying parsonages, and amid the gay licence and secret misery of their exile. Think, too,



of the sweetest of our English poets, George Herbert,<sup>1</sup> who refused a bishopric, preferring the daily sound of his village church bells calling the husbandman from his fields and the rustic wife from her spinning-wheel to hear these very Psalms, word for word, which you may read every morning and evening. Then think of the present—how deep, how catholic is the consolation they afford. Besides being read in every country of the world, and far over the ocean upon every parallel which marks out the ship's highway, think of their use in England. These same Psalms which I read this morning will be read in thousands of cottages, giving comfort to the widow and throwing a gentle halo over the happiness of young married folk; in halls and castles, in the hurry and bustle of cities, in parsonages, in stately cathedrals. The words which begin the first Psalm for this morning, "The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is," will be spelt out by the ploughman, and cheer him as he goes forth to his toil; will be read by the great London merchant to his assembled servants, and for half an hour will exert a soothing influence upon him and perhaps on them; will be wept over by the humble sorrowers that cover the face of every land, and will be intoned by white-robed choristers carrying consolation to bereaved ones—nay, to our Royal Widow herself.<sup>2</sup>

This has been the hottest day we have had. It did require an immense struggle not to take a nap in the middle of the day, but I kept your portrait before me all the while. Suddenly I heard the dead stifling silence outside broken by the chirrup of a single sparrow; then two crows moved in the trees and cawed expectantly. Immediately I arose from my table, threw open all my windows and doors, and in one moment the curtains were waving and flying about. It was the south breeze. A moment before all was dark, shut up, stifling inside my room, and red-hot and deadly still outside. But the south breeze—the delicious south breeze had come! A thousand crows cawed; the sparrows trooped in through my windows, dashing round the room, quarrelling, frolicking, chirruping. And I gave your portrait a kiss and went on with my Bengali. I do not care for any heat if only there is a slight breeze; it is the dead stagnation of air and animal life, both of beasts and birds, that is so trying. But do not think I am unhappy. Not a bit; only I long for you, and think often in the stifling afternoons and in the long but beautiful evenings, oh! if I could have a single overture from little Jessie's fingers, or one of our old songs. I do pine for music.

The fascination of tropical scenery viewed through the hallowing moonlight is the subject of Hunter's letter of the

<sup>1</sup> George Herbert was a younger brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. His volume of poems, entitled "The Temple," reveals a saintly character, and is still admired. He died in 1633, aged forty-two.

<sup>2</sup> H.R.H. the Prince Consort died 14th December 1861.



following day. It was written after a dinner-party at the house of Dr. Macrae, a leading Calcutta physician, who was destined to become a firm friend and ally.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*March 6, 1863.*

We had a pleasant party last night. After dinner we retired to the outer drawing-room, which generally consists of the verandah, and here most of the men got into solitary places and fell asleep, while three or four of us formed a circle round our beautiful hostess. They are such a treat these bright moonlight nights. Leaning over the rail of the verandah, I thought it must really be the work of genii. Three or four vast pillared palaces rose spectrally white before us; dark, rich, strange-looking trees waved in the southern breeze between them; the earth was covered with tropical shrubs and flowers all visible in the light of the full moon; and in the middle of the various gardens were the broad lake-like tanks, with their flights of steps glistening like marble. Not a motion except for the shadow of the trees reflecting their weird and stately dances upon the ghostly white houses. Not a sound but the never silent grasshopper and the faint echoes of some distant tom-tom with which the natives were beguiling the night in their far-off quarter. Mrs. Macrae was standing beside me, and I could not help saying to her, "Which scene out of the 'Arabian Nights' is this? When I leave the Service I think I shall have 'A Panorama of the East by Moonlight' painted, and go home and make my fortune."

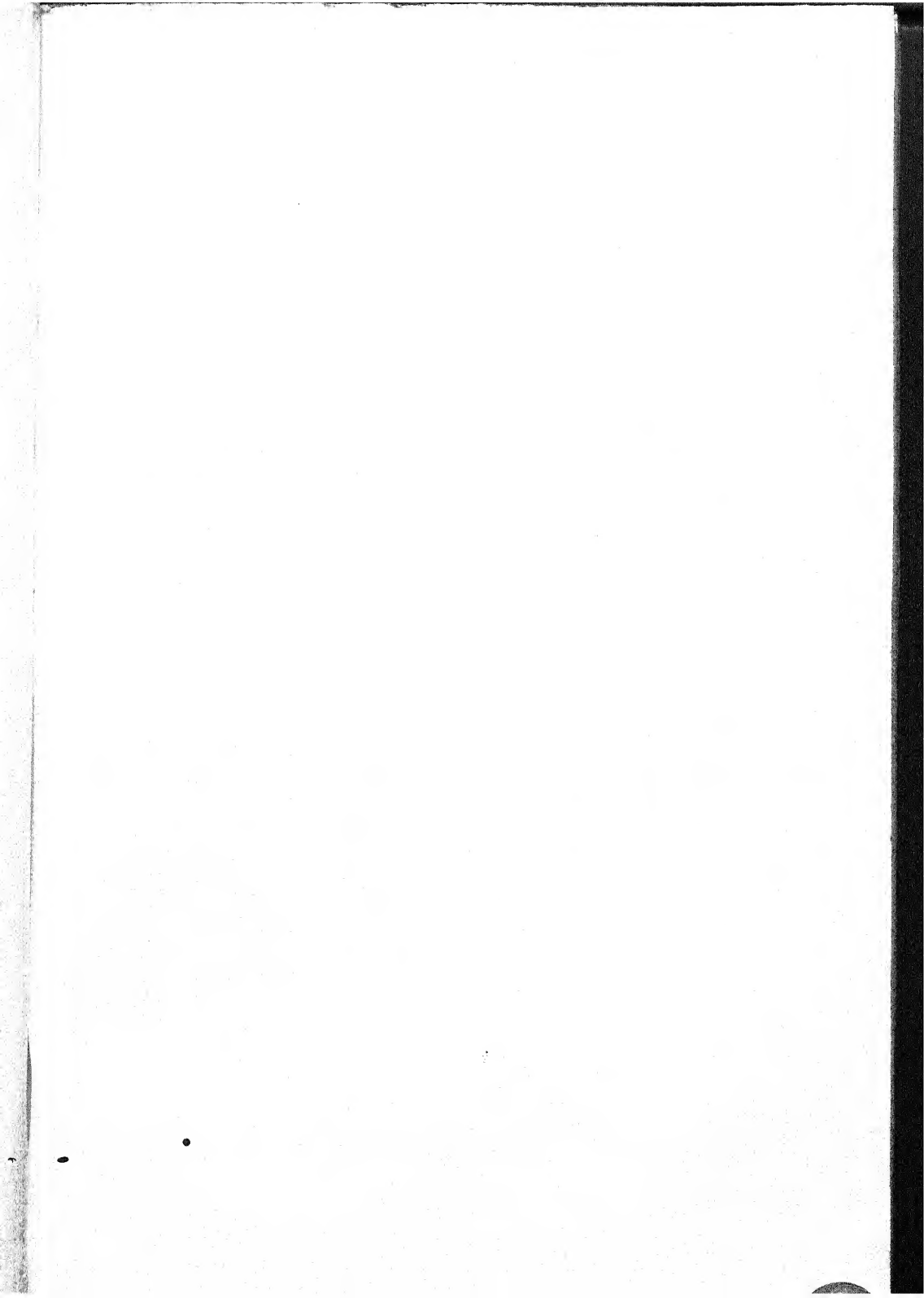
The Right Hon. James Wilson, Hunter's uncle, had died at Dr. Macrae's house in 1861. The touch of tragedy in his end, which came at the zenith of his powers and usefulness, affected his nephew deeply, and the next letter contains the germ which afterwards expanded into that delightful work, "The Thackerays in India."

TO MISS MURRAY.

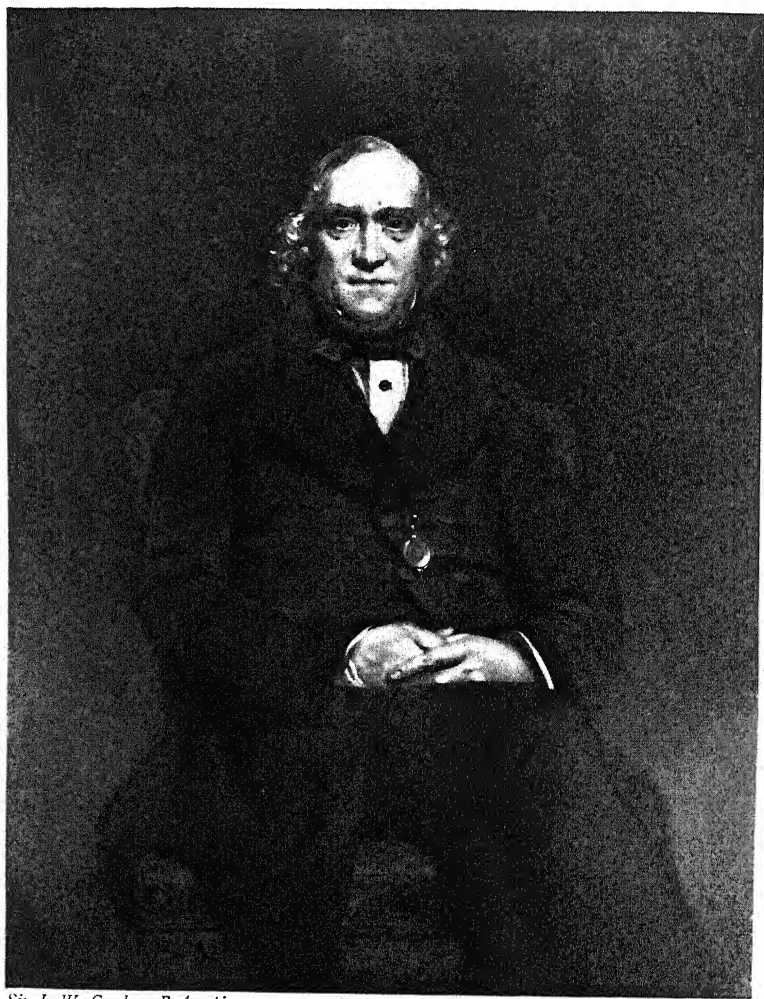
*March 9, 1863.*

I gave you a little sketch yesterday. Shall I give you another to-day? Well, it will be entitled, "A Visit to my Uncle's Grave." Our Calcutta burial-ground is situated on the borderland between the English and the native quarter. Your carriage turns sharply round out of Park Street, with its tall houses and green compounds, into a dusty road lined on both sides with thickly set native huts of mud or bamboo work. You first pass the old cemetery on the left hand. Great trees surround this city of the dead.









*Sir J. W. Gordon, R.A., pinx.*

RIGHT HON. JAMES WILSON



No more burials are allowed in it; the ground has received its prey, and now lies gorged and pestilential beneath the thick, dank foliage, as silent and deserted as Pompeii under its fifty feet of ashes. A hundred yards farther on you come to the gate of the new cemetery on the right hand of the road. Nothing becomes old sooner than a graveyard. Is there not a fine sermon in that board at the porter's lodge which requests visitors not to pick the flowers in the new cemetery—the new cemetery which is now filled up nearly to the surface with dead men? My dear, that board was painted some half a dozen years ago, when there were only a few graves and all the rest was a garden of flowers.

We passed along one walk after another, the tombs lying closely on both sides, not a single space or interval left for a new-comer. The marble slabs already streaked and discoloured with the rains, the brick and terracotta graves already crumbling to pieces; the soil so neatly kept, but so little of it now left for flowers, everything in that state of trim desolation which is the proper thing in "new cemeteries." My uncle's tomb is about the middle of the silent republic. It stands at the corner formed by two roads which intersect one another at right angles. No great monument appears—only a smooth sandstone platform raised about fourteen inches from the ground and surmounted by a plain marble sarcophagus. A few steps nearer the cemetery gate is the tomb of Sir Mordaunt Wells's wife; immediately behind my uncle is the resting-place of Dean Trench's two sons; next on the one road is the wife of an officer, and next on the other reposes a cavalry captain, who, after a wild, misspent life, now lies without a headstone to record his name—next to one of the men who saved India. My uncle's tomb is over one vault at the very corner of the two roads, while over the other is a little simple cross marking the resting-place of the Halseys' little baby, my uncle's granddaughter. One iron railing includes both. As I stood with my hat off, reading the great man's epitaph, I felt that it was not right to criticise such memorials by ordinary standards. It is long, and speaks his virtues boldly; but in an epitaph I always fancy there should be nothing said to which a candid man would hesitate to give his assent. In epitaphs, as in pulpit sermons, there is only one speaker. There is no person to dispute premises or to deny conclusions. I therefore hold that clergymen and epitaph-writers should be particularly careful not to assume anything which a fair-thinking man could with justice refuse to admire. Such a man, though he does not rise in his pew and point out the parson's false arguments, is seriously wounded in religious faith and feeling by being compelled to listen in silence to a sermon which he believes to be founded on error or on wilful misrepresentation. So a great man's epitaph should be so gentle, so catholic, that men of all parties can assent as they read, and go away softened and silent. My uncle came



out to save the Indian finances, and he died with his weapon in his hands, but before the hour of victory. To my mind nothing can be more touching than the wounded general who fights on while his life is gushing from him, and then lies down calmly in his armour to die on the field. He raises his arm, and supporting his head upon his hand, keeps his eyes fixed upon the cloud of dust from which one party will issue defeated and the other conquerors. The victory may be won, but the head falls to the ground before the stopped ears can hear the shout or the glazed eye can see the dust clear away and the enemy in retreat. So my uncle died, and he died well.

Dearest, would you like to hear how they buried him? I have the story from Mr. Moule, the senior chaplain at the Cathedral, who performed the service; also from the sexton and from Mrs. Macrae, in whose house he died. He had been more or less ill for some months, but a week at Barrackpur had somewhat restored his health, and he returned to hard work in Calcutta again. The very day before, he had begged Mrs. Macrae to come over to a quiet dinner in order to concert with his daughter<sup>1</sup> the programme of an "at home" which he wished to give one evening every week. His scheme was for his friends to come regularly or not as they felt inclined, in the French fashion. Those who cared for dancing might enjoy a waltz; such as were fond of music might listen to sonatas in another room; the elders indulged in whist, while the young folk who had a taste for flirtation carried on their little game in the verandah. Mrs. Macrae left him very full of this plan at night. Greatly to her horror, next morning at eleven o'clock her husband said to her, "I have just seen Wilson: he must die!" In a few days he rallied, but Macrae knew his time had come. All along my uncle had said, "Never mind the future; give me something to make me better for the present." This Macrae did, warning him that if the disease took a certain turn the use of such medicines would make recovery even more doubtful. Mr. Wilson was sinking and becoming very restless in his house, so Dr. Macrae had him brought to his own. At last the patient became anxious and said, "Now, Doctor, tell me the truth. How long are you going to give me to get my Bill through Council? A couple of months will be enough." Macrae shook his head again. "I think I may get it through in three weeks if it must be so." Another shake. "Come, don't try to frighten me. I *must* live a fortnight; it can't be done in less." Still the dreadful shake. "Can you give me ten days?" Another shake of the head. "Eight days, then—a week—five days?" (Fancy poor Macrae's feelings at having to refuse such petitions.) "Well, tell me the utmost limit?" Macrae whispered, "Not twenty-four hours!" Soon after my uncle became insensible, and almost slept

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs. Matthew Horan of Lamberhurst, Sussex.



his life away, but twelve or fifteen hours after this conversation he began to speak about his work again. Macrae was with him and held up his head. The last words he uttered were, "Oh, my poor Bill!" I believe he then became quite unconscious. Mr. Moule came and prayed beside his bed, and in the midst of a prayer he heard a deep sigh. The spirit had fled.

In April 1863 Hunter paid a visit to his newly-married friends, Dr. and Mrs. L——. They had settled at Barrackpur, a small military station fourteen miles north of Calcutta, widely known as the scene of the first rumblings of the mutiny in 1857 and as the country retreat of jaded Viceroy.

TO MISS MURRAY.

*April 19, 1863.*

I feel so sad this morning. The L——s are so good, and I can be good too when I am with pious people, but when I go away to my solitary rooms and have others buzzing about me who do not think of these solemn things, I become as worldly as themselves. Little Hetty is such a blessing to Leonard. He was better than most men before his marriage, but he is so changed now. And it is all because he is under the influence of a really pious girl. They have family prayers morning and night, and you cannot think how grateful I feel for having come out here, and how sad it makes me to think how I forget my duties to God. I could almost cry just now; they are so happy and good, and I so solitary and inconsistent. I do need some one who is always better than myself—I mean always better, not only sometimes. For sometimes I do draw near to God and humble my heart before Him, and resolve to live for Him, but next day come the cares of the world and choke the good seed. I sometimes feel myself such a match for time and chance that, although I know to whom I owe all my strength, yet I cannot pause to thank Him. Although my body is not of the most robust type, yet I feel myself endowed with such physical endurance and such mental activity that for days I pass my time in a long, happy dream of continual action. Every moment of the day I am reading hard, or writing down my own speculations, or taking rapid walks up and down my room; and all night I dream of my future and of you, and nothing wearies me in these moods. The hottest day is not too hot. Six hours' sleep, full of dreams, are enough to refresh me after sixteen hours' hard work. It is beautiful to see Leonard and Hetty together. They consider me a brother, and tell me that they are going to behave as if they were all alone. For these two children the primary curse has surely been forgiven! Leonard has only one hour a day of work, from eight to nine in the morning; then all the long,



delightful twenty-three he is with Mrs. Hetty. I do not think there is half-an-hour that she is not toying with his hair, or caressing his moustache, or pinching his eyebrows, or punishing him for some imaginary fault by trying to bend back his great wrists with her toys of hands. And he is so good to her. He lies in a long armchair and allows himself to be played with, and speaks so kindly to her. And life is such an easy, sunny matter to them both. No books to distract, no ambition to make them restless; the present, the present, that is enough. Oh, why were we both born ambitious? I do not wish it otherwise; but the continual ease, the freedom from worldly temptations, the gentleness of heart, and humility before God that such dear souls as these enjoy, alas! we can never taste them! But is not private advancement with us merely the fruit of doing good to others? It seems hard to find out where the scheme for the general good ends and where private interest creeps in. I do love these Indian races so much, and I do so long to obtain a hearing for India in Europe, that sometimes I fancy if I were to work on without ever thinking of God I should still be doing good.

Religion has very little to do with theology. Just now, for example, I am deep in the works of the Casuists in defence of the Roman Catholic faith. They are just as much a relaxation as Adam Smith's "*Wealth of Nations*," or Mommsen, the modern Niebuhr's, "*History of Rome*." Indeed, sometimes when my eyes are fairly wearied with Sanskrit or Bengali characters, I hesitate which of these three books I shall take up. When I am most tired I fly to Cardinal Wiseman's lectures, for their ingenuity and generally sound argument are exceedingly interesting, and yet they require no lengthened reflection before I either adopt or rebut them. I never could be a Roman Catholic, but I wonder that more people do not become so. It is the consistent Church, or rather the Church in which, by the labours of pious and talented men for ages, the reasonableness of its religious system has been made most clear and patent to all. If we grant its premises we get over all the inconsistencies and difficulties of Protestantism; and those premises contain a maxim which removes these difficulties by placing them beyond the reach of reason and within the province of faith. The Protestant is distracted with doubts because he goes abroad and sees for himself; the Catholic has no doubts because he lingers quietly within his cloister and believes what he is bid. The truth is that reason is not a sufficiently fine instrument for dealing with God's thoughts. It is like a good telescope, which when used for not very distant objects acts wonderfully, but when you apply it to remote islands you see things more distinctly, no doubt, than with the naked eye, but all discoloured and distorted, a rim of confusing colours round the scene, and men like trees walking. So is reason a wonderful power, but how uncertain a sound does it give upon God's great work compared with an instrument which



God Himself has given us—Faith! . . . Now, love, I feel so relieved that I have told you all my feelings. Yes, let us live our own life. No man can be anything but himself without losing more than he gains. But let us remember the true value of success—a thing to be sought after and prized, but not to be the sole object of our lives.

By this time the Indian dog-days were at their zenith, and the gaieties of Calcutta had suffered their wonted eclipse. Enforced confinement in darkened rooms to escape the pitiless glare which made the stony streets a furnace, sleepless nights when the punkah failed to give even the semblance of coolness to the air, began to tell heavily on a frame enfeebled by prolonged study. Hunter's old enemy, neuralgia, returned, and his elasticity was strained almost to breaking-point.

TO MISS MURRAY.

June 4, 1863.

I sometimes think I have not dealt quite fairly with you in always writing as if I were in good spirits. Indeed you know that my temperament is one which finds pleasures easily, and is capable of very intense happiness. But the very cause which gives me so many joyous moments condemns to many a long hour of melancholy. I do not know how it has come about that a person with my nervous and apparently buoyant temperament should be for ever prying into his own heart. But so it is, and these are always sad days for me. Then, although I go a good deal into society and know a number of people, for the last few months I can't bear to go out. My greatest pleasure is a solitary ride, thinking about you. I feel almost criminal in not caring for the society of other young men, and at times we are apt to fall into worldly feelings, into pretending to be better than we are, and to looking to one another (or at least I to you) for fresh food for our vanity. Some people's vanity is pleasant and harmless; for example, Leonard's. It will do him no harm if his wife sits at his feet and looks up to him all his life; he will still be a very popular fellow. But my conceit is quite different. I really do not feel myself superior to others. Indeed, I generally feel the very reverse, and do my best to conceal it. In truth, it does not much matter whether a man thinks himself inferior or superior; if he thinks about himself at all, ten chances to one he is a disagreeable fellow. It is precisely on this point that my education has been neglected.

The annual deluge which comes in Lower Bengal with the second week of June brought some relief to Hunter's overwrought system, but he still pined for his long-promised bride.



TO MISS MURRAY.

June 20, 1863.

Three years and three days have now passed since you gave me your pledge to be mine, and I trust that I may be as good a husband to you as I have been a faithful lover. Indeed, never for a moment have my affections strayed from your gentle keeping. I often feel very unhappy about my temper, for I am so irritable and captious that I am continually under the necessity of feeling ashamed of myself. It is dull work, however, all alone in this hot wet city, poring over my books in a dark room from morning to night, with the melancholy plash of water gushing from the spouts on the roof incessantly heard outside. And now about my views. I am afraid that if I were to read for highest honours in Sanskrit the examiners would not grant them before January or February. However hard a man may work, it is intended that a Degree of Honour shall only be obtained in a year's time. If I were a bachelor I should stay here and read Sanskrit; not from any idea of obtaining distinction—for no one here cares for learning—but because I am convinced that the man who worthily writes the history of the Sanskrit race will gain for himself a place among the few writers whom the whole world agrees to honour; and that such a history will never be worthily written except by one who knows both the literature of the ancients and the character, habits, and superstitions of their degenerate children. Only a Sanskrit scholar who has lived in India can accomplish this. But I am afraid we should lose too much, from a pecuniary point of view, by staying so long in Calcutta.

These far-reaching ambitions were stilled for the moment by the voice of worldly prudence, which always appealed strongly to the practical side of Hunter's character. He reflected that in a few months he must set up house at a provincial station with a bride who would bring him little besides her maiden love and a heart-whole devotion to his interests. He therefore bent all his energies upon mastering Bengali, which is a true daughter of the noble Sanskrit tongue, possessing the mellifluousness of Italian with the power inherent in German of expressing complex ideas. Within five months of his arrival in Calcutta he became fully qualified for the public service by passing an examination in this difficult vernacular, and he afterwards obtained a certificate of high proficiency therein with a substantial pecuniary reward. No contingency which fate might have in store for him escaped his calculations.



TO MISS MURRAY.

*July 6, 1863.*

In five years from the time you join me we shall be able to retire on about £400 a year of our own; and if I am obliged to do so from ill-health, there is no doubt papa will make it up to £600. And then we should spend our first four years half on the Continent and half at home, passing the gloomy autumns and winters abroad among the vineyards and picture galleries of Germany and noble old Italian cities. It is strange that, although I am such a contented fellow, I always feel that my present profession is only a means towards giving me an opportunity of becoming an independent man of letters. Perhaps this is only a device of the wicked one to lead me into great mistakes, but it has always been my belief from early boyhood that literature was my natural career. If I retired in good time from India, I might hope to have done something before I was thirty-two, when it is my ambition to settle near your friends. If my class of writing is successful at all, it brings the author the respect of political men. You know how strong my passion is for political history. Oh, how much is to be done in that subject. I should be possessed of an education and training such as are given to very few. The advantages of an academic career combined with early travel I share with most cultivated young Englishmen, but add to these five years of administrative duties in India, a sound knowledge of several Eastern languages, and, if we spent four years on the Continent, an acquaintance with the literature of the Latin races, and I venture to think that very few men in England would have a better chance of succeeding as an author. Besides, I am not one of those who are careful only about the *matter* of history. Such men may be great chroniclers or searching logicians, but they are seldom standard writers. For I should be anxious to make my books pay something into our little domestic exchequer, and if a book is to be remunerative it must be written in an attractive style. Now this point has always been a subject of close study with me, and I do think that in the matter of style I should have a fair chance of succeeding. What pleasure it would give me to do justice to this fallen race and to vindicate the conduct of England in her dealings with India!

Hunter seized the last occasion on which he could communicate with Miss Murray before the meeting so ardently longed for, by tendering some excellent advice as to her conduct on board ship.

*July 8, 1863.*

When you hear anything said, any story told, any word approaching a scoff at religion, or the least attempt at indelicate wit



or allusion, show by your manner that you are not pleased. Who are you or any other young girl, to reprove strangers for coarseness or irreverence? But be sure to show the offender that you do not approve. However much a man may like a fast girl *pour passer le temps* on a voyage, be sure that he respects a reserved and modest one. Be yourself in all things, and you will be all that a husband or lover can desire; in manners open and friendly to every one, in conversation the attentive listener rather than the speaker, making no confidantes, suspecting or thinking ill of no person. Above all, never allow yourself to think that you are inferior to one person or superior to another. Avoid being intimate with gentlemen whom the other ladies shun. But why do I write all this? Not because you need my advice, but because I know that, though not required, it will be followed, just as I should obey any injunction you might lay upon me.



## CHAPTER VII

### A MARVELLOUS RECOVERY

MISS MURRAY sailed from the London Docks on 12th August 1863, in the auxiliary screw vessel *Mauritius*, which in the following year was blown by a cyclone out of the Hugli and deposited a quarter of a mile inland. On the first day of December the fated vessel arrived at Calcutta, after a tedious voyage of 103 days, and the impatient lover had at last the joy of clasping his *fiancée* to his heart. He was in the highest spirits, and the flush of health and happiness gave a very different appearance to the pallid student from whom she had parted a year before.

During the brief remainder of her single life Miss Murray was hospitably entertained by the Accountant-General of Bengal, Mr. E. F. Harrison, of the Civil Service, and his wife. From their house she was married on the 4th December at the Calcutta Cathedral, in the presence of a host of friends, Mr. Moule, a well-known chaplain of that day, being the officiating priest, and Mr. T. W. Gribble the bridegroom's best man. The honeymoon was spent at Baudry's hotel in Chandernagor, one of those poor fragments of a vanished power which serve to remind the French that they once strove with ourselves for mastery in the East.<sup>1</sup> It is a bright little place, essentially Continental in all externals, and bathed, like its mighty neighbour, by the swiftly-flowing Hugli. Their happiness was cut short by the inexorable call of public duty. On 10th December

<sup>1</sup> The survival of Pondicheri, Chandernagor, and other French possessions which sparsely stud the map of India is not the most creditable episode in the diplomacy of a people who "make war like lions and peace like asses." Prince Talleyrand completely outmanœuvred the British representatives at the Congress of Vienna in 1814, and the East India Company found, too late for effective protest, that the *status quo ante bellum* had been restored in India, and that they were saddled with the payment of an indirect subsidy to their vanquished rivals, which goes far towards supporting the inflated establishments maintained in these paltry colonies.



Hunter was gazetted as Assistant Magistrate-Collector of Birbhum, a small district about a hundred miles north-west of Calcutta. He arrived with his bride on Christmas Eve at their new home, destined to become famous as the nidus of the "Annals of Rural Bengal."

Birbhum is thus described in that immortal work:—

On the west rise the mountains, covered to the summit with masses of vegetation. Gorgeous creepers first wreath with flowers, then strangle their parent stem, and finally bind together the living and the dead in one impenetrable thicket. Here and there an isolated hill with a flat top stands out like a fortress in the plains. From ravines arched over with foliage turbid cataracts leap down upon the valley, there to unite with rivers which at one season of the year pour along in volumes of water half a mile broad and twenty feet deep, and at another season dwindle to silver threads amid wide expanses of sand. Over the uplands the jungle still holds its primitive reign, affording cover to wild beasts and cool glades for herds of cattle. In general the plains undulate gently eastwards, dotted with fruit-bearing groves, enamelled with bright green rice-fields, and studded with prosperous villages.<sup>1</sup>

Suri, the capital of this well-watered land, rich in noble scenery, is a town of about 8000 inhabitants, twelve miles by road from Sainthia, then a station on the main line of the East Indian Railway. It covers a ridge of laterite, for Birbhum, unlike the Gangetic valley to the north and east, is no alluvial plain, but an outlying spur of India's central mountain citadel. The European residents occupied bungalows on either side of a broad thoroughfare leading to the crowded native town, which commands exquisite views of villages buried in foliage seen across the gentle slope of terraced rice-fields with a background of distant hills. Their chief was the District Judge, who gave the new-comers a hearty welcome. Then there was the young assistant's official superior, the Magistrate-Collector, a warm-hearted old Irish doctor, and a staff corps captain who superintended the newly-formed Bengal police. These, with their womenfolk, were seven in number, and they formed a pleasant and hospitable little society. Its centre was the Judge's house, depicted in the "Old Missionary" as—

An imposing white edifice with Doric-pillared verandas and a flat roof, in the midst of an extensive park dotted with ancient

<sup>1</sup> "Annals of Rural Bengal," 7th edition, p. 1.



trees. A long avenue led across the parched sward to the Judge's garden, which was separated from the main park by a public road. This garden, the work of a line of judges during a hundred years, was the one spot always green in an arid station.<sup>1</sup>

Arid indeed is Suri, except during the months immediately following the annual rains, which dye the fields with the brightest green. Like Hunter, I set up house there with a young wife a quarter of a century later, and well do I recollect the oven-like heat of the dog-days, and the still more exhausting steaminess of the rainy months. Suri was the sleepest of hollows, and the only creatures which showed any approach to activity were the snakes. We lived in daily peril of our lives from cobras and a tiny but most venomous viper called the *kerait*, which had a fashion of sleeping coiled round a door handle. It was a standing marvel with us that any great and lasting work should have been written in such surroundings.<sup>2</sup>

The Hunters established themselves in a bungalow which stood nearly opposite the Judge's mansion, on the left of the highway leading to the native town. There are few sights so mournful as a ruined English home in Bengal, where the annual deluge and parasitical vegetation combine to destroy any house which remains a few years uncared for. In 1887 Hunter's was roofless, and it has now disappeared. Twenty-five years earlier it was a one-storied building with two large apartments, one of which was divided to form bedroom and dining-room. The industry and good taste of the young people soon gave it an air of comfort, but the furnishing and plenishing drained the domestic exchequer, and they started no less than £140 in debt for absolute necessities. So they sternly resolved to live

<sup>1</sup> "The Old Missionary," 1896, p. 68. As recently as 1888 the Judge's stable contained the relics of a cumbrous eighteenth-century coach, which had been despatched by Warren Hastings to convey the Judge's wife of the period to Calcutta. She probably preferred the easy if leisurely palanquin to the jolting of a wheeled vehicle on the tracks which then did duty for roads.

<sup>2</sup> One day my wife and I were sitting under an umbrageous banyan-tree which stood close to our house at Suri. She was singing, while I was investigating the economy of a white ant's nest, another local plague. Suddenly the melody ceased, and looking towards her, I saw a large cobra slowly gliding in her direction with erect head and extended hood swaying rhythmically from side to side. She called loudly to me, and the creature turned and fled like lightning to its hole.



on £17 a month and devote the balance of £23 left from an assistant-magistrate's pay of £40 per mensem to liquidating their liabilities. The few who have tried to maintain the position expected in a covenanted civilian on such a pittance will appreciate the sacrifices entailed by this Spartan resolve. And yet their Scottish thrift enabled them to bear their full share of station hospitalities. Suri, like most of the smaller Indian centres, had its Mutton Club, managed by an honorary secretary, who kept a sufficient stock of sheep, bought at less than two shillings a head, and fattened them for the table on a diet of pulse. One was killed every week, and the meat divided among the five members. The hostess on whom devolved the succulent saddle was expected to ask the other members to dinner, followed generally by a modest game at loo, and such music as her much-tried piano afforded. These symposia were Hunter's chief social relaxation. Throughout life he had a passion for yachting and horses. The first was, of course, unattainable in Bengal; the second was indulged by the purchase of divers native ponies, yclept "tattoos," spirited little creatures, despite their fiddle-heads and cat-hams. Mrs. Hunter soon learnt to enjoy a gallop at early dawn, or when the swiftly-approaching darkness took the sting out of the Indian sun. And as finances improved, so did the supply of horse-flesh.

The daily routine, when the cold weather of 1863-64 had passed, is vividly told in the "Old Missionary":—

The hot winds set in like a consuming fire. The large double doors which form the windows of an Anglo-Indian house stood open all night and were shut up tight in early morning. . . . The public offices opened at seven and closed for the day at noon. Then each man drove swiftly through the furnace of shimmering air to his darkened and silent home. A lingering bath and a languid breakfast brought the hot hours to one o'clock. The slow combustion of the suffocating afternoon was endured somehow under the punkah, with the help of endless bundles of papers in one's office box, read by chance rays which fiercely forced an entrance through every chink in the double doors of glass and wood. About six we all met at the racket-court, whose high wall by that time cast a sufficient shadow. A couple of four-handed games (the doctor was grown too stout to play) left us steaming at every pore and making at each step a damp foot-print through



our white canvas shoes on the pavement. Then the delicious plunge in the swimming-bath in the Judge's garden—the one moment of freshness looked forward to throughout the exhausting day. A cheroot and an iced drink as we lay fanned by the servants on long chairs at the top of the Mount,<sup>1</sup> and, presently, almost in a minute, the sun had once more hidden his malignant face, and the blinding glare of day gave place to the stifling stillness of night.

But for official duties, supplemented in rare cases by the pursuit of literature under difficulties, life in a small Bengal station is intolerable to any one with a modicum of culture. Hunter rose with the sun, sometimes before it, and after the obligatory tea and toast, now naturalised in England as *chota haziri*, he cantered to the Government offices. There, seated on a dais in a dark little hole dignified as the "Assistant-Magistrate's Court Room," he endured the endless verbosity of native attorneys and the tissue of fabrications spun by witnesses in petty criminal and rent cases till long past noon. But his novitiate was abridged by the knowledge of the vernacular which had won for him the special prize for high proficiency therein.

He was appointed Sub-Registrar of Deeds relating to loans and land transfers, was placed in charge of the District Treasury, and became increasingly useful to his superior officers. Unfortunately the latter belonged to the category of Haileybury men who regarded "competition-wallahs" with unconcealed dislike. The civilians of the old *régime*, taken as a whole, held out the right hand of fellowship to the young colleagues who owed their position to brains, not family connection. But there were exceptions, and amongst them was the Magistrate-Collector of Birbhum, whose indolence led him to impose on his young assistant duties which lay beyond the scope of the powers conferred on beginners by the Government. At length Hunter was compelled to tender a respectful remonstrance, which led to much unhappiness until his jealous chief was transferred to another sphere. He was replaced by Mr. John Lewis, a civilian of a very different type. Experienced, tact-

<sup>1</sup> "The Old Missionary," 1896, p. 71. This description includes some features which are not to be found at Suri—the racquet court, for instance, which appears to be a reminiscence of the larger station of Midnapur.



ful, and warm-hearted, he soon gained Hunter's respect and affection, and a life-long friendship sprang up between them.

The District Judge was, again, Mr. Lowis's antithesis, and a passage of arms took place between Hunter and himself which is too characteristic to be omitted. The wealthiest of the native houses in Birbhum was that of the Hetampur Raja. In 1864 it was represented by a boy who had not been made a ward of court. He had thus fallen under Zenana influence, and was deteriorating in mind and body owing to excessive indulgence and the absence of any attempt to fit him for his future responsibilities. Hunter visited Hetampur in order to search the family archives for materials for his "*Annals of Rural Bengal*," which he commenced within a few months after arriving at Suri. He at once detected the evil influences which surrounded the young chief, and his innate sense of justice rose in revolt against the apathy of the District Judge, whose duty should have prompted him to interfere.

Private and official remonstrance were alike unavailing, and the annual vacation was at hand, which would give the relatives an opportunity of spiriting the lad away far beyond reach. He therefore took the very bold course of proceeding to Calcutta and laying the matter before his friend, Mr. R. Barclay Chapman, a Member of the Board of Revenue. So pressing was his insistence that the Board obtained an order from the Calcutta High Court directing the District Judge to deal with the Hetampur case at once. Armed with this mandate he hastened back to Suri. On arriving at the Sainthia railway station at early dawn, he found the Judge on the point of starting for Darjiling, and his luggage actually placed in the waiting train.

Hunter at once addressed the truant. "I am very sorry to interfere with your holiday, but I have an order from the High Court in my pocket which directs you to dispose of the application for making the Hetampur minor a ward without further delay."

The Judge: "Nonsense! I've closed my court, and I can't possibly take the matter up till my return."

Hunter: "But, sir, the holidays don't begin till to-morrow. Besides, the matter is urgent; the boy will be utterly ruined if



we leave him in his present surroundings for two months more."

The Judge: "I can't help that; my court is closed."

Hunter: "Well, sir, here is the order (producing it). If you decline to take cognisance of it, I shall have to post it up in your court."

This was a decisive blow. The Judge reluctantly prepared to return to Suri. But his buggy had been sent away, and he refused a seat proffered in Hunter's which was waiting at the station. He was relieved, however, from a weary trudge of eleven miles by the arrival of his own conveyance which Hunter sent back for him on overtaking it on the way home. When the court opened a few hours later, the daring young Assistant appeared in support of the application. His adversary said with ill-grace, "Here, take your order," and immediately adjourned the sitting. The Hetampur Estate was saved.

But such episodes were of rare occurrence. The numerous letters which have been preserved from Suri residents prove that Hunter's relations with them were, on the whole, most harmonious, and that his researches into the history of Birbhum met with every encouragement. The missionaries labouring at Suri were especially helpful. The district marches with the Santal Parganas, an upland region inhabited by an aboriginal tribe which has successfully withstood the assimilating process adopted by the early Aryan invaders. They are a primitive race, maintaining a precarious existence by hunting and the fruit of patches of wasteful cultivation.<sup>1</sup> Like other wild tribes they are subject to gusts of fierce and unreasoning excitement, but they are not steeled against Christianity by the influence of a highly developed religion. At Suri, therefore, the seed cast by missionary efforts fell upon favourable ground, and the agents posted there during the wave of enthusiasm excited by Carey, Ward, and Marshman's labours at Serampur had a certain measure of success. Their chief was an aged man who had been a contemporary of Dr. Murray's

<sup>1</sup> The pressure of population is severe in Santalia, and little colonies of the tribesmen are to be found attached to most indigo factories in Bengal. Money is scarce there. My wife asked a Santal, during one of our cold-weather tours in Birbhum, what his monthly expenses were. He replied, after a long pause, "Well, if I am very extravagant I spend a rupee."



at the Edinburgh University. He was known as "Doctor" Williamson, from the fact that he had studied medicine in order to increase his hold on his flock. Among them, and as one of them, he had lived for half a century without once visiting Europe, and had thus gained an intimate knowledge of native character and customs which he was ever ready to impart to others.<sup>1</sup>

Hunter sat at the feet of this capable instructor, and the result of their friendship is patent in his earlier literary work. The patriarch undoubtedly suggested the hero of the "Old Missionary," but the author told me that it was highly idealised, and that, in point of fact, three missionaries had unconsciously sat for their portraits. His abode is aptly described in that charming idyll as—

A straggling, one-storied bungalow, with the thick thatch projecting low over the verandah. Originally it must have consisted of two small rooms. Various artless additions, jutting out at angles to avoid the sun or to catch the breeze, recorded the changing needs of a long life, as the want of an office for the sale of books, or a dispensary for the sick, or of chambers for his wife and child arose. But the rough wooden pillars of the verandah were festooned with flowering creepers which gave a picturesque unity and a grateful sense of greenness to the whole. The cottage stood in an ample orchard of mangoes, guavas, custard apples, and other fruit-bearing trees, planted by the missionary's own hand in skilful rows to allow free passage for the wind.<sup>2</sup>

From his intercourse with Williamson sprang Hunter's life-long sympathy with Christian missions, a sentiment which is rare among European officials in India. Their attitude must not be misinterpreted. It is, in great measure, due to the policy of the British Government, which is, and must remain, one of benevolent neutrality towards attempts at proselytising the natives. No foreign *régime* which incurred the suspicion of favouring such efforts would stand for a decade in India. Oil was poured on the flame of the Mutiny of 1857 by rumours set on foot by the disaffected that we aimed at forcibly converting both Hindus and Mohammedans to our own creed. "Dín! Dín!"<sup>3</sup> was a battle-cry which never failed to attract a furious

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Williamson died at Suri in 1867.

<sup>2</sup> "The Old Missionary," p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> An Arabic word meaning religion—the Faith, as we should say.



mob to the standard of revolt. The situation in 1866 was still a delicate one, for the scars of that great cataclysm were hardly closed. It is graver at the present day, for we are face to face with a revival of the spirit of Islam throughout India, the outcome of a sedulous propagation of Wahabi doctrines. And Hinduism, hitherto supposed to be a non-progressive creed, admitting no converts within its fold, shows an unexampled elasticity and opens its ranks to millions who were once regarded by the elect as hopeless outcasts. With this silent revolution Christian missionaries are powerless to deal. The dreams of the saintly band who put apostolic ideals in practice at Serampur, of Heber and Duff, have been belied by the inexorable logic of facts. Our missionaries have tacitly abandoned the attempt to meet the phalanxes of Islam and Brahmanism by an army of itinerant preachers, and content themselves with maintaining efficient schools and colleges where Hindu and Muhammadan lads may gratify their heart's desire by winning university degrees without the slightest risk of proselytising influences. The workings of the leaven which was destined to give new life to the moribund creeds of Asia did not escape Hunter's observant eye, and we shall presently see that it inspired his first effort as a journalist.

The Anglo-Indian press has not yet found its chronicler, although the theme, treated with sympathy and adequate knowledge, would be of great and permanent interest. In no civilised country does the Fourth Estate encounter greater drawbacks, and the high literary level maintained by the leading newspapers is as convincing a proof of British persistence as any afforded by Indian history. The conditions under which an editor labours in the Presidency towns differ radically from those with which Fleet Street is familiar. The sparse European population is widely scattered; while the natives are too poor or too thrifty to indulge in the luxury of a daily paper. Hence the circulation of the most influential organ of opinion is trivial when judged by a Western standard. Nor is their income from advertisements at all considerable; where customers are few, merchants and tradesmen do not find their account in trumpeting their wares at vast expense. Thus a Calcutta editor is not surrounded, as is his English colleague,



with a staff of well-paid assistants who are prone to resent the intrusion of an outsider. He courts the amateur contributor, and is only too glad to open his columns to any one who has a story to tell and the power to clothe it in a pungent or graceful style. Anglo-Indian journalism afforded a noble area for a young man thrilling with energy and conscious of the possession of great literary gifts. Nor were sterner incentives wanting in Hunter's case. His income in 1864 was less than £500 a year, and the prospects of speedily increasing it were vague enough. He cast about him for an opportunity of obtaining a footing in the press, and found one through a curious train of circumstances. Towards the end of July he met Captain G. R. Fenwick, the editor of the *Indian Daily News*,<sup>1</sup> at the stables of a Calcutta horse-dealer. He was in treaty for a remount, and, finding himself forestalled by Fenwick, he asked whether his rival was inclined to surrender his bargain. The latter yielded with good grace, and added, half in jest, "But I shall expect you to write an article for us as a *quid pro quo*." Hunter took the editor at his word, and on 6th August 1864, his first contribution to the daily press made its appearance. It is headed, "Interior Sketches: I. The Wahabi," and is a striking picture of one of those missionaries of the great Puritan movement which was shaking Islam to its foundations, and was fated in a few years to give English statesmen so much uneasiness. This early effort displays no signs of immaturity, and the exordium has the life-like touch which astonished the world in the "Annals of Rural Bengal":—

It is only an old man talking to a group of Mussulmans under a *pipal* tree.<sup>2</sup> Close by, an undersized reddish pony, with a large head fixed on a lanky neck, is trying to scratch the flies from a saddle-gall by means of a very ragged tail. The poor beast, his

<sup>1</sup> This newspaper, which still flourishes as the organ of Calcutta trade, sprang from the *Bengal Hurkaru*, which made its first appearance as a daily in 1819. Its tone was radical and utilitarian, an echo of views which, about a decade later, produced the first Reform Bill. It enjoyed a succession of able editors, amongst whom were Sir John Kaye, the historian of the Mutiny, and the late Mr. James Hutton. Shortly before Hunter's connection with the *Daily News*, it passed under the control of a Calcutta syndicate. Captain Fenwick, who then edited it, was a Crimean hero.

<sup>2</sup> The wild fig tree, *Ficus religiosa*; so called because it figures in Hindu mythology, and is one of the objects of tree worship. It is a citadel of dense perennial foliage.



fore legs crippled with rope, hops painfully from one tuft of grass to another, occasionally turning his head round savagely on some fly beyond reach of the meagre tail, and then stretching out his neck in that utter listlessness which animals worn out with travel sink into. The old man has a fresh complexion and a long white beard; he mumbles his words a little, but not enough to hide the vigorous up-country inflection with which he delivers his sentences. He himself seems very much in earnest, but his eight or ten hearers listen with stupid eyes, and, saving a slight salaam when they depart, come and go with all the freedom of a street preacher's congregation in England. It is the month of May, and the old man is vehemently denouncing the follies of the coming festival. He is by no means careful not to offend. He tells his hearers that they will all wear their new clothes over their old hearts; that they will stun their ears with the lutes and drums of the Bengali unbelievers till they are deaf to the melody of the Koran; and that the whole festival of the Mohurrum, its sham fights, its feigned mourning, its wild feasting, its mock penitence, are utterly abominable to God and His Prophet. The Mussulmans of a quiet Bengali village are generally not the best sort of soil for a reformer to cast his seed into, and, as the group breaks up at the close of the harangue, public opinion, though divided, is mainly against the speaker. . . . Altogether, the sermon has fallen rather flat, and the preacher is aware of it. The crowd, when dispersed, leaves a residue of two Mussulmans in soiled clothes, who appear to be fellow-travellers of the preacher, and who watch his every movement with veneration. He talks to them in low, quiet tones for a short time, and then composes himself to sleep, while his dirty disciples fan him by turns. The jaded pony, too, has given up any further search after the parched tufts of grass, and, forgetful of his daily wrongs, sleeps standing under an adjacent tree. In the cool of the evening the party departs as it came, unnoticed, the old man on the pony, and the soiled followers trudging on either side. The unsuccessful preacher is the representative of many thousand earnest men at this moment wandering over Asia, sometimes acknowledged, sometimes ignored at the mosques, teaching divers doctrines, speaking various tongues, but all devoted to the quiet task of purifying the creed of Mohammed, as Hildebrand's monks purged the Church of Rome.

This portrait, drawn from the life, attracted wide attention, for in point of style and vigour it was far above newspaper writing in those days. Such a contributor was not to be lost sight of, and Captain Fenwick speedily struck a bargain for three articles a week of a column and a half at £3, 4s. apiece. Between 6th August and 31st October, the young journalist furnished no fewer than seventy columns of closely printed



matter, which cost him, as he told his editor, "my whole time available for writing—more than five hours a day."<sup>1</sup> Every current topic was handled in masterly style; but the most noteworthy of these early contributions was the series of sketches which opened with "the Wahabi." They supplied materials for the "Annals of Rural Bengal," and many other works of permanent value. No. 4 evidently suggested the opening chapter of "The Thackerays in India," and it contains an exquisite description of the peaceful God's Acre at Suri:—

In the centre of the little plot of ground an aged tamarind tree rises and spreads its delicate foliage widely enough to shade all the graves. There is one feature of the place that speaks most tenderly of the feeling of exile and longing for home. All the graves turn wistfully towards the west. They lie in sight of a beautiful mountain range, among which the sun sets, and towards which the eyes of all Englishmen in that retired district nightly turn. The hills are about twenty-five miles off, and at this season stand out exquisitely clear and blue beneath the illuminated sky. Rich floods of crimson pour through their defiles, and above is a great sea of light interspersed with islands and continents of purple clouds, reminding the living of the sunsets of England, and shining forth as a visible realisation of the faith of the dead. None of the sleepers beneath that tamarind tree have any relatives in the district; but those tombs, all rigidly looking towards that distant land whither the thoughts of the living constantly turn, have pleaded powerfully with the successive generations who have ruled in the district. . . . Despite Bengal damp and heat, it suggests only that feeling of gentle and not unwelcome sadness that steals upon us in the rural churchyards of England.

Suri was a holiday resort for Judges of the Calcutta High Court in times when a railway to Darjiling was undreamt of. Amongst the long vacation visitors in 1864 was Mr. Walter Scott Seton-Karr, who is, I believe, the last surviving godson of the "Wizard of the North." He was deeply moved by the pathos of this description, and struck up a friendship with the young writer which was broken only by death.

Another sketch contains the first germs of "The Thackerays in India." I am told by Mr. W. H. Verner<sup>2</sup> who was Assistant Magistrate at Suri when the news of the great novelist's unexpected death was flashed throughout India, that Hunter

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Captain Fenwick of 6th August 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Verner became Hunter's closest friend and was his executor.



felt the blow as a direct and grievous personal loss. His feelings found adequate utterance in the "Master Hand," which appeared on the 24th December 1864:—

It is not often that a death so gentle and beautiful is granted to a man of letters. After a youth of many disappointments, after a manhood of sore domestic trials, Thackeray had reached a calm and sunny haven like that in which he places his veteran Admiral.<sup>1</sup> The jealousy with which his rivals had viewed his rise to fame had lost much of its rancour. Though grey-headed he was still young; "so young a man," to use the words of Charles Dickens, "that the mother who blessed him in his first sleep blessed him in his last." . . . There is something in the calm death on Christmas Eve that reminds us of his exquisite Cathedral scene, where, upon another December day, his hero returns home after many trials and sorrows, bringing his sheaves with him. There is a sweet romance, a romance seldom granted to men who depend for their bread on their writings, in the last words which he corrected in print. These, the last public utterance of Thackeray, were, "And my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss."

Hunter's last article in the *Indian Daily News* appeared on the 3rd February 1865. His editor quarrelled with the Board of Direction who then mismanaged the journal, and transferred his allegiance to the *Englishman*, taking his brilliant contributor with him.<sup>2</sup> The latter's first article in the leading Calcutta daily paper is a criticism of a Bill to regulate Indian Forestry introduced into Council, not before it was sorely needed, by Sir Henry Sumner Maine. It appeared on the 1st January 1865, which is the date of a connection destined to have a

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Duval, in that exquisite fragment "Dennis Duval."

<sup>2</sup> The *Englishman* originated in the opposite pole of political thought to that which inspired the *Indian Daily News*. In 1821, the year when the quarrel between George the Fourth and his luckless Queen attained its climax, "John Bull in the East" appeared as "the supporter of Church and King, and the contemner of private scandals," which latter had hitherto been the mainstay of Calcutta journalism. Its title and platform were evidently borrowed from Theodore Hook's truculent organ. The new venture obtained the support of many civilians of rank, and became the channel of official utterances. But its stubborn hostility to reform soon told on the subscription list. The paper was moribund when it was purchased for a song in 1833 by Mr. J. H. Stocqueler, who christened it the *Englishman*, and gave it a new lease of life. Amongst his staff was Charles Thackeray, an uncle of the great novelist, who showed in his sober moments that his kinsman had no monopoly of the family's literary power. At the *Englishman* Press Macaulay had rough proofs set up of his essays on Clive and Hastings. After the Mutiny the *Englishman* was bought up by Mr. J. O'B. Saunders, father of the present chief proprietor.



momentous influence on Hunter's whole career. The proprietor of the *Englishman* was the late Mr. J. O'B. Saunders, physically a genial giant, mentally a very able man of letters with a wide experience of Indian men and things. His unflinching tact led him to esteem Hunter's assistance at something like its proper worth, and—a thing almost unheard of in India—he made the young civilian a member of his literary staff. "I agree to your terms," he wrote on the 27th January, "and will pay you Rs.250 a month for three articles a week. And please do not consider yourself bound to write a column or so at a time. I shall be as well pleased with half a column as with longer articles. You give up your connection with all papers in Lower Bengal, except as you wish an occasional article to oblige a friend."

Thus Hunter at twenty-four was in receipt of an income from his press-work of £300 a year, a very welcome addition to his official remuneration. It was the more needed because the cares of a family commenced at this early stage. On the 25th January his first child was born, a boy, who was christened Broughton after an eighteenth-century connection of his maternal grandfather's family. The happy event involved a serious drain on the family exchequer. By dint, however, of severe economy all the attendant expenses were met, and the young couple found themselves at length clear of the load of debt and the proud possessors of £7 safely deposited in the Agra Bank.

Anxious to add still further to these slender revenues Hunter applied for work to the late Sir George Allen, who had just started the *Pioneer*.<sup>1</sup> This was a new departure in Indian journalism, a well-considered attempt to take the fullest advantages of the extension of railway facilities in Upper India. Allahabad, its headquarters, stands about midway between Calcutta, Bombay, and Simla, and no better centre for a newspaper could have been found. Thus the *Pioneer* pros-

<sup>1</sup> The recent death of this remarkable man did not attract the notice which his varied career deserved. He founded the Punjab daily paper, the *Civil and Military Gazette*, as well as the *Pioneer*. He shares with Colonel Stewart, C.I.E., of Ardvorlich, in the honour of developing the great tanning industry at Cawnpore, where a boot factory established by him employs thousands of hands, and proved of priceless value in equipping our soldiers for service in South Africa.



pered exceedingly as the mouthpiece of the official and military classes; while the standard of its literary work has always been as high as that of any London journal. Hunter's overtures were met by the Rev. Julian Robinson, the first editor of the new paper, with the caution always shown by the brotherhood. Before committing himself to a definite engagement he "wished to see his contributor at work, that he might judge of his punctuality and sustained fertility." Hunter's initial paper in the *Pioneer* was printed on the 2nd January 1865. It was a review of a new Act for regulating the registration of documents. Others poured in; and on the 3rd February we find Mr. Robinson writing: "I think your articles, regard being had to the excess in India of the demand for good writers over supply, very cheap at the price." The postulant was forthwith admitted as a member of the *Pioneer's* staff on a honorarium of £10 per mensem for a weekly contribution. On 10th May he told Mr. Girdlestone, of the Civil Service, who occupied the editorial chair as a stop-gap, that he had already written 151 articles for the Indian press.<sup>1</sup>

An impression prevailed with those who were unaware of Hunter's great capacity that these *parerga* were performed at the expense of his official duties. The district records of Birbhum tell a very different story. In 1864 he tried 202 criminal cases, in which 326 persons were concerned; and the result of appeals from his decisions won special encomium from the Calcutta High Court. We find him undertaking a laborious inquiry into complicated malpractices alleged against the jailor at Suri, and submitting a report to his superior which is a model of acumen and sound legal knowledge. He was singled out for praise by the Accountant-General of Bengal for the punctuality with which his returns as Treasury Officer were submitted. In point of fact, his newspaper articles were written in time devoted by others to sleep or relaxation. They were usually dictated to his wife, who was throughout his life an incomparable amanuensis, during the hours following luncheon. Again and again was a messenger despatched to implore the Suri postmaster to keep his mail-bag open a little

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 22nd December 1864.



longer in order that the manuscript might be despatched in time for the morrow's issue.

It is impossible to glance through the portly folios in which Lady Hunter has preserved her husband's early contributions to the press without amazement at the exuberance and literary gift displayed by them. The large majority treat of subjects possessing local interest. It was said a few years ago of the Parisians that they would prefer the story of an accident to Sarah Bernhardt's lapdog on the Boulevards to the most harrowing details of foreign earthquake and battle. Europe is still a far cry for the exile who is sated with home events reiterated in the avalanche of periodicals received by every mail. His taste lies in the direction of current Indian history; and Hunter catered for it with an ability which proved him a born journalist. Commerce, legislation, currency, military and social events of moment were handled with rare vigour. The lapse of thirty years has not robbed these trenchant columns of all their point; and many richly deserve republication. Amongst them is a truly admirable series of Country Sketches in the *Englishman* during the course of 1865, whose interest was by no means exhausted by the appearance of the "Annals of Rural Bengal." Among Hunter's many claims to the gratitude of his countrymen must be remembered the fact that he has left his mark on the Indian Press, and raised it to a distinctly higher plane.

Nor must we overlook the effect on his own mental development of his early devotion to journalism. We have seen that all his subsequent achievements are found in embryo in the brilliant essays which were so eagerly looked for on Anglo-Indian breakfast tables thirty-five years ago. The habit of writing "against time" and irrespective of mood was gained during this apprenticeship. It is hardly saying too much to aver that, but for the welcome accorded to him by the editors of Calcutta and Allahabad, the whole series of works which they suggested would have remained a dream of Hunter's fertile brain. Among the lessons of this strenuous career is that of the advantages flowing from a connection with the daily press. The power of literary expression exists in all educated men and women; but in the vast majority of cases



it remains dormant until an age is reached when new impressions and fresh pursuits can no longer be hoped for. India is an inexhaustible field for every description of research; and an official stationed in the interior comes in contact with many traces of a vanished civilisation, many quaint survivals of long past ages. The example set by Sir William Jones fired his own generation to explore the history and archæology of the land of their sojourn. One cannot help regretting that this wholesome influence should have spent itself, and that the institutions which owe their being to his noble zeal show few signs of vigorous life. It is urged in excuse for the existing divorce between journalism and the servants of the Government that the latter is now an exacting taskmaster. I speak from long experience when I assert that this impression is wholly erroneous. However hard may be the tale of official work, an official who economises time—his most precious possession—can always find leisure for attempts to leave the world wiser than he found it. His press-work will come as a relief from the routine which envelops him and tends to cramp his powers. It will enable him to bear the jealousy and injustice which dog the footsteps of every man who shows originality and energy; and it will pave the way for successful authorship when the Indian days are done. The young soldier or civil officer whose lines are cast in the East will find lasting profit by following in Hunter's footsteps.

In July 1865 he was torn from his beloved studies at Suri and despatched to Kushtia, then the terminus of the Eastern Bengal Railway which connects Calcutta with the rich northern districts producing jute and tea. Here he became responsible for the administration of criminal justice in a densely peopled area of 558 square miles. And, as if these duties were not sufficiently absorbing, he was appointed superintendent of the transport of coolies *en route* for the tea gardens of Assam and Darjiling. Society there was none, and the sub-divisional officer's residence was an island in a turbid sea, the overflow of the mighty Ganges, which has since well-nigh obliterated the Kushtia that Hunter knew. • In September malaria was bred by the receding water, and the place became almost uninhabitable. Hunter's



constitution, which was never robust enough to answer the calls made upon it by his intense energy, gave way under the strain. His neuralgic headaches grew more frequent, and dysentery supervened. But he still worked on, supported by a highly-wrought nervous system, until a certain morning in October, when he fainted in court, and was carried home insensible. This climax convinced him that rest was absolutely necessary. He obtained two months' privilege leave, and spent them at Suri.

His high spirits soon returned amid congenial surroundings, and prompted him to resume a labour of love which was destined to bring undying fame. In the previous April he had sent to a Commission engaged in examining the public records of the Province, a memorandum embodying the result of his researches in the Birbhum archives. This paper won the thanks of the President, Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr; and Hunter was thus encouraged to launch out on a larger scheme, which developed into the "*Annals of Rural Bengal*" and the "*Imperial Gazetteer of India*." On the 24th August he submitted to the Government some observations on the ancient records of his district, a step which led to his being placed on special duty, in order to prepare an official history of Birbhum. He was directed to report progress in three months' time.<sup>1</sup>

His first care on returning to Suri from Kushtia was to make a précis of all papers belonging to the period anterior to that great landmark of Bengal administration, the Permanent Settlement, and to procure copies of the more valuable ones. He then proceeded to verify the vernacular documents placed at his disposal by the leading native families, and to visit every place of note described in his narrative. These tours were an unfailing source of delight, which would have been unalloyed had not Mrs. Hunter's anxiety on the score of her infant's health kept her at headquarters. During one of them he wrote to her from Elambazar:—

The last twenty-four miles of the road hither runs through a dense wood. The trees lay close on either side, and every now and then I came to spots where the air was laden with perfume precisely like that of the honeysuckle. It was charming; the full

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Bengal Government, No. 6944, dated 4th December 1865.



moon, the ancient forest, the cool steady breeze, and the scent-laden air. I thought tenderly of you and the wee boy nestling close together.

The Annals were sufficiently advanced at the beginning of March 1866 to admit of their author's furnishing Government with an abstract of their scope. He made the little district with which he was best acquainted an object lesson for English readers, and enabled them to grasp the meaning of their position in India. The history of Birbhum under its native princes was vividly recounted—their constant rebellions against the Viceroys of the moribund Mughal Empire, their duties as Wardens of the Western Marches, their powerlessness to repel the inroads of the wild aborigines from the neighbouring hills and the more dreaded raids of Maratha bands. He told how a weak Government became anarchy when the district was depopulated by the famine of 1770, and the survivors were hemmed in at its centre by beasts of prey. Then he revealed the first germs of the principle of order as evolved by the genius of Warren Hastings and directed by an all-powerful European chief ruling with the full force of the military arm. He traced the influence for good exerted by the commercial dealings with the East India Company, which slowly weaned the hill tribes from lawless pursuits. The weaving villages which clustered round their factories were havens of refuge for the peaceable artisans; while the large annual investments, the sumptuous residences, afforded sure guarantees of the permanence of British rule. Nothing escaped the chronicler, from the complex system of land tenures to the modifications introduced in the ryot's mode of life by the new excise regulations. Next we see the beginnings of the existing reign of law as established by Marquis Cornwallis. We are shown the effect of his Permanent Settlement<sup>1</sup> on the Company's landed estate; and the work closes

<sup>1</sup> This great measure was introduced tentatively in 1789, and became law four years later. Under the Mughals, whose sceptre we assumed, the soil throughout India was the property of Government. The zemindars, literally "landholders," were hereditary farmers of the revenue derived from land. Lord Cornwallis, himself a territorial magnate, aimed at creating in Bengal a squirearchy such as he had seen in his native Kent, and he conferred on the zemindars an absolute proprietary right in the lands which they had farmed, subject to the payment of a quit-rent calculated on the existing yield. How little the English Collectors of that day knew of their charges may be gauged by the fact that a native revenue officer, who afterwards posed as a great



with the year 1795, when his reforms were in full swing. Thenceforward district records lose much of their interest, for a highly centralised Government, working with the smoothness and uniformity of a machine, replaced the personal sway of Hastings' lieutenants. Such was the scope of Hunter's history of Birbhum, which delighted the English people two years later as the "Annals of Rural Bengal."

The task of collecting materials for his great work took Hunter at the end of April to Calcutta, where he was the guest of Dr. Norman Chevers, one of that succession of able and kindly physicians who have done so much to alleviate human misery in India. He told Mrs. Hunter in an undated letter:—

Yesterday I had a great deal of knocking about in the sun, and was thoroughly tired out before getting home. A headache in the evening, which a long sleep has put right; and now, after a day's rest, I am as well as you could wish. At ten o'clock yesterday I went to Mr. Long's.<sup>1</sup> He has a rare collection of Indian books in great confusion, and almost useless, because packed in huge deal boxes. I found some interesting matter, and made a number of extracts on the spot. Mr. Long is most unlike a *padre*—fine, bold features, large head, bushy whiskers and flowing beard, stout, immensely energetic, and rather below the middle height. Then I went to the Bengal Secretariat, where I found Mr. Geoghegan,<sup>2</sup> who read me a resolution of the Lieutenant-Governor approving of all I had done, accepting my proposal of publishing it in London, and recommending a deputation allowance of Rs.100 per mensem, with retrospective effect since December. Is not this famous? . . .

social reformer, was paid £10,000 for omitting a cypher in the statement of assets of a single estate. History has belied the Marquis's optimism, which expected that the advantages conferred on the zemindars would be extended by them to the cultivators. The former, as a body, are content to enjoy the unearned increment due to British laws and the influx of British capital, and are generally annuitants on the land.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. James Long (1814–1886) came to India in 1846, in the service of the Church Missionary Society. He threw himself into the ryot's cause, and fought their battle stoutly against the indigo-planters. In 1860 he published a translation of a Bengali drama entitled "The Mirror of Indigo," and brought upon himself a prosecution for libel; but his book became a sort of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and led to drastic changes in the relations between planters and natives. He was also an early worker in a field which Hunter made his own. His "Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government," published in 1855 and subsequent years, cast a flood of light on Anglo-Indian life a century back. There is material for half-a-dozen novels in these forgotten volumes.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. Geoghegan, of the Bengal Civil Service, afterwards became Under-Secretary to the Government of India, and, but for his early death, would have earned the highest distinction.



Your sweet letter made me sad. It also determined me to give you a change of air. We will spend ten days together in a beautiful villa which has been lent to me a few miles up the Hugli.<sup>1</sup> The part we are to occupy consists of a handsome drawing-room with a piano, a bedroom, and a dining-room, all on the first floor, with delightful verandahs, gardens and a broad flight of steps leading down to the river's edge. The Longs are to have a bedroom on the same floor. I enclose a list of things you are to bring with you.

The catalogue included his MS. of the Annals, and "plenty of music and Scotch songs." Mrs. Hunter was prevented by illness from joining him at this pleasant retreat, and at the end of the month he returned to Suri.

On 17th May he received, quite unexpectedly, orders appointing him to officiate as Inspector of Schools in the South-Western Division, and twelve days later instructions came to proceed to Midnapur in order to prepare the Annual Report on Education for the preceding year. His route thither lay down the Hugli to Ulubariya, whence he wrote to his wife on the 29th May:—

I started from Calcutta this morning in a little native steam-boat, whose engines panted the whole way as if she were climbing a hill. At eleven o'clock P.M. the tide ebbed; we put into shore, and the captain and crew turned in and went to sleep. Not an inch did we budge till 4 A.M., when I woke the skipper and insisted on his going on. I had spent the night at the house of a native brickmaker, a man very well to do, and superior to *bakhshish*.

His impressions of Midnapur, which was reached on the following day, were given in a letter of the 1st June:—

It is a beautiful station, very green, with noble trees, a broad river, now at a low ebb, and many picturesque drives. The houses are larger than those we know at Suri, and there are a great many more of them. Rents are low, living is said to be very cheap, and the place is remarkably healthy. The people, about a dozen families in all, are by no means so sociable as we used to be. The civilians in particular keep a good deal to themselves, and station parties are of rare occurrence. On the other hand there is a general rendezvous every evening at the "Malet Tomb," erected

<sup>1</sup> This villa belonged to Babu Jaykrishna Mukharji of Uttara para, whose life was a standing protest against Macaulay's sweeping aspersions on the Bengali character. His friendship for Hunter was inherited by his son, Raja Peary Mohun Mukharji, C.S.I., whose suburban retreat was always at Hunter's disposal.



by an old gentleman in memory of his horse, overlooking the river and a forest-covered valley, on the other side of which rises a hill crowned by an old Maratha fort. It is altogether very green, cool, and picturesque, reminding me of a stretch on the Rhine.

Midnapur stands, like Suri, on laterite, and is one of the hottest stations in the Province, especially during the awful weeks which precede the annual rains. In his next day's letter Hunter complains bitterly of the suffocating atmosphere. But his indomitable energy kept him continually active:—

Yesterday I rode out to the ruined fort on the hill called Gop. In returning I encountered a terrific storm. My horse's nerves gave way, and he appeared quite resigned to being swept before the blast. This did not suit me at all, so I dismounted, fastened the reins behind the stirrup-leathers, in order that, if he bolted home, they might know that I was all right, and held him firmly by the head. The rain stung me through my linen coat like duck-shot. My nag, poor fellow, had no idea of trying to escape, but placed his head first on my shoulder, then between my arm and breast, and so kept me up. In an hour the wind abated sufficiently to get back, not much the worse, except for a deafness, the result of the rain beating on my ears.

I am much out of sorts in this weather—disturbed sleep, no appetite, a plague of boils. I have no strength for bodily or mental work, and can get on with my Education Report only by the help of sips of brandy and water.

At the close of July he saw the effect on Midnapur of the awful famine which was devastating the neighbouring districts of Orissa. It was due to the isolation of that outlying dependency of Bengal and to the optimism of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Cecil Beadon, and his lieutenants, who were misled by the local officers, and did not attempt to grapple with the situation till it had passed beyond the reach of human effort. He lost no time in communicating his impressions to the Director of Public Instruction:—

All around us the greatest misery prevails. Thirteen hundred people in Midnapur are getting relief from the State—one pound of rice once daily a head, but the poor creatures are too weak to cook their food, or even to raise themselves from the ground, and they lie munching the hard grain.

These, however, are not the worst cases. An empty house has been turned into a hospital for those who are quite helpless, and as soon as a patient is able to stand he is thrust out to make room for those who are lying on the roadside or in the drains.



He returned to Suri on 24th July with an assurance that he would not be disturbed in his new functions for some time to come. Early in the following month the little family bade farewell to their Indian home and started for Midnapur, the headquarters of the Inspector of Schools of the South-Western Division. The journey was fraught with fatigue and peril, and its incidents contrast strangely with the prosaic features of railway travel now universal throughout India. The Hunters journeyed by road in their own victoria drawn by a pair, their third horse being sent forward at alternate stages. August is the month least suited of the twelve for a fitting, for it is a time of suffocating heat varied by downpours of which those who have never visited the tropics can form no conception. On arriving at the bank of the river Damudar the luckless travellers found it a raging torrent. The only means of transit was a crazy ferry-boat, into which were crammed the victoria containing the mother, child, and Portuguese nurse, flanked by the horses on either side. Each was firmly held by the head, while its master stood behind to manipulate a cunning apparatus of ropes, so devised that on either animal showing signs of fractiousness he would at once be forced overboard. Then a start was made to cross the Damudar at 8 A.M., but it was past ten at night ere the boat was able to make a creek on the opposite bank. The horses were lifted through the sea of mud left by the receding waters by the help of bamboo leverage, and the family, now fairly worn out, made their way to the embanked high road and started for the rest-house. Hunter was driving, and well it was that he retained the presence of mind which never failed him in times of stress. The carriage had not proceeded far ere the driver saw a broad black line bisecting the road immediately in front. This proved to be a chasm made by the floods. There was nothing for it but to unhitch the horses, let the carriage down the bank, and drag it painfully to the summit of the road on the other side of the gap. The little party arrived at the rest-house to find the third horse, which should have met them on the left bank of the Damudar. The heavy luggage and commissariat still lagged behind, and a newly killed duck was the only sustenance afforded by the very poor substitute for a hostelry. At



Bankura, the next halting-place, Hunter was invited to dinner by the head of the district police, who supposed that he was travelling alone. On learning that a forlorn wife and infant were waiting hungrily in the empty rest-house, this Good Samaritan sent what provisions he could muster. But there are no bakers' shops in small Indian towns, and the only fragment of bread available was not larger than Mrs. Hunter's palm. Broughton lived during that journey on biscuits and jam, contracting a life-long aversion to those dainties. On reaching their destination, with so many pains and perils, the Hunters found an old Suri friend installed as Joint-Magistrate, in the person of Mr. W. H. Verner, and gladly accepted his offer of hospitality. But the much-needed rest was denied the young Inspector of Schools. The Government was anxious to ascertain the effect of the Orissa famine on the schools of the neighbouring districts, and he started at once for the interior. On 28th September 1866 he described the appalling state of things encountered at the old city of Bishenpur<sup>1</sup> in a letter addressed to the Director of Public Instruction, which attracted the notice of Government:—

On arriving at Bankura I learnt that the distress was very great, and accordingly came out here to see what effect it had upon the schools. I found Bishenpur, once the most populous place in Bengal, a city of paupers. Between two and three thousand persons are fed every evening, and the officer in charge of the relief operations stated in his report for last month that cholera had broken out in its most virulent form. . . . Both my deputy-inspectors and teachers are frightened, restless, and without much heart in their work. I never knew that educated Bengalis could be such arrant cowards. . . . The Raja of Balrampur has given Rs.1300 in aid of indigent students in Puri schools. Personally, I consider that this sum might have been more usefully employed, but it is better to refrain from interfering with private benevolence at the present juncture.

Not content with doing his duty as an official, he revealed the sad results of administrative neglect in a pungent article in

<sup>1</sup> This was the ancient capital of Birbhum, and, according to a native chronicler, was "more beautiful than the abode of India in heaven." Small traces of its ancient splendour remain, but amid the ruins of the citadel a huge cannon is shown which, according to tradition, was a gift to the Raja from one of the gods of the Hindu Pantheon. Bishenpur and Calcutta are the only Bengal towns shown in large print in the map attached to Abbé Raynal's "History of the East and West Indies," London, 1776.



the *Englishman*. Calcutta stood aghast at the thought that, barely one hundred miles away, thirty-five poor wretches were dying daily of hunger, and multitudes of deserted orphans were roaming the streets and subsisting on worms and snails. An attempt was made on the part of the District Magistrate to impeach the truth of the story, but the dauntless writer proved its accuracy up to the hilt. His sympathy went far beyond words. He collected the starving little ones in a temporary orphanage, and expended £20 from his own resources in feeding them.

The fatigue and exposure involved by these prolonged tours in a climate which is the most trying in the world to the European constitution, exhausted Hunter's scanty stock of strength. His old foe dysentery made itself felt, and on returning to Midnapur he reluctantly took to his bed. On 22nd October he developed remittent fever, with typhoidal complications, and would have succumbed there and then but for the assiduous nursing of his faithful wife, who was aided in her divine office by Mr. Verner and Mr. Herschel.<sup>1</sup> In the throes of delirium his mind constantly reverted to the statement as to the effect of famine on education which the Bengal Government was anxiously expecting. His trembling fingers simulated the act of writing on the bedclothes, and he murmured, "My report, my report," just as his uncle had thought only of his unfinished work when in the agonies of death. On 1st November he passed into a state of torpor, and Dr. E. C. Bensley, who attended him, felt it his duty to warn Mrs. Hunter that the end was near. When the patient rallied a little he was told that he could not live more than twenty-four hours. He received the news with calmness, settled his affairs, and bade farewell to those around him. The future of his infant son was much on his mind at this awful crisis. "Jessie," he whispered more than once, "make Broughton a clergyman." Soon afterwards came the turning-point in this strange malady. Mr. Herschel described it in a letter written a few months later :—

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<sup>1</sup> Now Sir William Herschel, Bart. He was then in the Bengal Civil Service, and was stationed at Midnapur.



From MR. W. HERSCHEL.

June 16, 1867.

There was an hour in the night which we thought was to be your last. I was kneeling by your side, and you asked "how long the passage would take?" You had been quite still for many minutes, and certain signs in your breathing made me think that but few more remained. Then your pulse ceased altogether to be susceptible, and the breath no longer came. I had no more doubt that your new life had begun than I had of my own existence. Your wife's face was buried in your pillow, and I did not venture to move lest I should disturb her. I daresay that you were not unconscious even then, for it was wonderful how great your composure of mind was all through. We can but surmise, by what we see and learn in such lessons as this, that there may be laws and orders issued of which we know nothing but their results. There is no reason why your recovery after that interval of suspense should not rank with that of the son of the widow of Nain. The one thing is as much a miracle to me as the other, neither more nor less.

An incident occurred during this protracted trance which proved that the sick man's brain was even then capable of receiving impressions. While those around him were waiting in patient despair for the end, a knock was heard at the door, and a gaunt figure entered. It was a Baptist missionary, a new-comer at Midnapur, who said that he had heard of Hunter's dying state and wished to speak to him of his soul. "But he is too ill to see any one," objected the poor harassed wife. The intruder strode past her to the bedside, sat down, shook his head solemnly, and said, "You are a sinner, yes, a miserable sinner!" There was a moment of silence in the sick-room, and Mrs. Hunter saw a glimmer of cold steel in her husband's eyes such as came there when his gentle spirit was stirred by cruelty or injustice. She took the over-zealous stranger by the arm and led him forth.

At length Hunter's immense vitality asserted itself. On 4th November, after thirty-six hours of death in life, he roused himself and took medicine and food. But a second period of stupor supervened on the 7th, and was succeeded by others which occurred every third day and left the sufferer increasingly weaker. At the entreaty of Mr. Verner, who had been transferred to Calcutta by Government, Dr. Joseph Ewart, a leading physician of that city, hurried to Midnapur on consultation.



The concluding phases of this illness, which brought Hunter as near the grave as any one who has lived to see God's sunshine once more, are told by that excellent physician:—

FROM SIR JOSEPH EWART.

*December 25, 1900.*

When I saw him in November 1866, in consultation with Dr. Bensley, the latter's diagnosis of enteric was confirmed. We promptly decided that the best prospect of recovery, under all the circumstances of the case, consisted in securing a sea-voyage to England with the least possible delay. The patient was accordingly transferred in a comfortable boat to Calcutta in charge of Dr. Bensley, but nursed exclusively by Mrs. Hunter. The P. and O. mail steamer was caught on the second day after his arrival. At the time of departure the forecast of the case was doubtful, but we recognised that during the journey from Midnapur the vigour of the heart and circulation was well maintained.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the patient, still insensible, was carried on board the *Nubia*, bound for Southampton, a year's leave on medical certificate having been promptly granted by Government.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the author. The writer has been repeatedly Mayor of Brighton, and was knighted in 1898.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST TRIUMPH

THE sea's ozone-laden air works wonders for sufferers from tropical disease, but its effect in Hunter's case was not apparent till the *Nubia* reached Ceylon. The first sign of returning consciousness was a gentle pressure of Mrs. Hunter's finger as she was administering an orange. She started, her eyes met his, beaming with love and gratitude, and she knew that her dear one was restored to her.

When the patient regained the power of speech, his mind gathered up the threads dropped a fortnight before in the Midnapur sick-room. "Jessie," he murmured, "don't make Broughton a clergyman." His wife could not repress a smile at the recollection evoked. Another spell of oblivion followed. Then Hunter awoke again to life and asked feebly, "Jessie, why did you laugh?" On learning the cause, he said, "Was he really a clergyman? I thought he was the devil, and I've been chasing him ever since!" From that moment he began to mend. A relapse was brought on by the suffocating heat of the Red Sea, but his spirits rose again in the Bay of Biscay, where the foam-crested Atlantic waves recalled the joys of yachting on Northern waters. At Southampton, which was reached on New Year's Eve, his father met the returning exiles; but he was horrified when the invalid demanded a large supply of sweet-stuff, and proceeded to share it with his happy wife. Thence they journeyed to London, and, after a night's rest, to St. Anne's Mount, Lasswade, where the warmest of greetings was given them by Dr. and Mrs. Murray. Hunter was still unable to move without assistance, but much good was effected by a strychnine tonic, and more by exercise in the bracing air. His medical attendant recommended driving, and a horse and wagonette were purchased, which gave the



invalid many a delightful expedition undertaken regardless of the wintry weather.<sup>1</sup>

With returning health came the old love of literature. Hunter resumed his regular contributions to the *Indian Press*, writing, as an entry records in one of the folio volumes in which the survivors were gathered by his wife, at first sixteen then twelve articles a month for the *Englishman* and *Pioneer*. He had looked forward with some eagerness to an opening in the wider sphere of London journalism, and one was offered him on the staff of the *Day*, a daily paper aptly named, which made its bow to the British public on the 19th March 1867. It was founded by the short-lived Adullamite party which sprang from Mr. Robert Lowe's strenuous opposition to Lord Russell's Reform Bill,<sup>2</sup> and edited by J. O'B. Saunders and James Hutton, formerly of the *Indian Daily News*. For the new venture Hunter wrote a series of telling articles on the Orissa famine, which had profoundly stirred the public conscience at home. Without attempting to minimise the catastrophe he proved that Sir Cecil Beadon and his colleagues in the Bengal Government did not deserve the diatribes hurled at them by newspaper critics who found it easy to be wise after the event. He showed that they had done more than had been demanded of their predecessors in 1770 and 1838, when Bengal was swept by similar visitations. In the *North British Quarterly Review* he discoursed as eloquently on the same theme. Nor were official duties neglected, although they were works of supererogation for one who had come home to recruit

<sup>1</sup> 1866-67 was one of those old-fashioned winters which we now sigh for in vain. The frost lasted for twenty-five days without intermission; the roads round Edinburgh were blocked with snow, and innumerable birds perished.

<sup>2</sup> This faction grew out of the determined opposition evoked by an abortive Bill for parliamentary reform, the work of the Liberal Ministry. Mr. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke (1811-92), led it, and never did he display more brilliancy and persistence in debate. Thus he defeated the Bill and brought about the fall of his whilom associates from power; only to be overreached by Disraeli, who induced the Tories to bring in a measure of reform of their own, admitted by Lord Derby to have been a "leap in the dark." The knot of seceders from the Liberal camp, headed by Mr. Lowe, were dubbed "Adullamites" by Mr. John Bright. The *Day* was as ephemeral as its title suggests and as the party which it represented. It flickered out at the end of April 1867, and Mr. J. O'B. Saunders complained bitterly to Hunter of the selfishness and insolence of his aristocratic backers.



his health. He furnished the Bengal Director of Public Instruction with a most interesting report on the effect of the famine on the schools of the South-Western Division, which went to show that the attendance of boys actually increased during the months of the severest mortality. This won for him the special thanks of the Bengal Government.<sup>1</sup>

On the 23rd February he was well enough to pay his father a visit at Low Walker near Newcastle, and on the 25th wrote thence to Mrs. Hunter, who remained with her parents:—

To-night I go to a little party at Newcastle; and on Thursday to the Oratorio with half-a-dozen ladies; so you may well think that a change has come over the spirit of my dream.

A few weeks later he went to the Berwickshire manse of an old friend of Dr. Murray and obtained a glimpse of the uncivilised surroundings in which so many of the Scottish clergy were content to dwell:—

Mrs. M—— says little, but at last we got her to wake up on the subject of the decease of a cow worth £10 from eating too many turnips. Do you know this visit forms an unpleasant commentary on Dr. Lee's sermon last Sunday. It is all too true. Mr. M—— is a successful minister, and yet the only soap in the manse is of the strong brown sort.<sup>2</sup>

Brighter times awaited him at Glasgow, where he spent some delightful days with the friends of his youth, James Barnhill, Ferguson, and Hutcheson. He wrote to Mrs. Hunter on 7th April:—

I do so long to be with you again. Whenever I leave you in order to mix with other people your image constantly presents itself, gentle, loving, and refined. I cannot help comparing you with other girls. Amiable and pretty though they are I always feel proud that it is *you* who are my wife. You must not think, because my letters are sometimes short, that you are ever long absent from my mind. You know how many people I have to call

<sup>1</sup> Demi-official letter to Hunter from the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated 27th February 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Robert Lee, minister of the famous Greyfriars' Church in Edinburgh from 1843 till his death in 1868, was a pioneer in the movement for rendering the services of the Scottish Church more attractive. He was the first minister to introduce the organ and a printed liturgy. His end was hastened by the bitter persecution he endured at the hands of the "unco guid."



on here. Indeed I have not a moment to myself, and sometimes, in spite of the pleasure at grasping so many friendly hands, I am tired out by these repeated welcomes. My work is at a standstill, and I long to get back from this little ovation to my sweet wife and the daily duties of home. . . . I attended the old church this morning. Many of the familiar figures are gone, and their places are by no means filled. The music is as good as of yore, with a pretty, modest girl as choir-leader. The ancient dark cedar rafters and exquisite Gothic arches as solemn and restful as ever. The lecture, a disquisition on the conduct of the Israelites after passing the Red Sea, was in good taste but cold and shallow—in short, Dean Stanley and starch. I hope you are having your new dresses well and fashionably made. Hoops are almost out.

On 13th April he returned to Lasswade by way of Airdrie, and on the 24th he started with his wife and child to attend at Newcastle his younger brother's wedding. After a fortnight, made pleasant by jaunts to gray old Berwick-on-Tweed and long mornings spent in the spring sunshine, they migrated to Eyemouth, near Ayton, the Berwickshire home of Dr. Murray's old friend, Mr. Bell. Their host and his wife were most companionable, and the invalid enjoyed many a sea-picnic and ramble on the towering cliffs. But the task of preparing his official history of Birbhum for the English public soon called him to London, and the 13th of May found the trio domiciled with Mr. J. O'B. Saunders at 19 Phillimore Gardens. Through the kind offices of Sir Proby Cautley,<sup>1</sup> Hunter obtained access to the treasures of the India Office Library then stored in Cannon Row. Amongst them were two trunks of MS. deposited there many years previously by Mr. Brian Hodgson, whose laborious life was afterwards written by Hunter. He at once discerned the value of this mass of forgotten lore, bearing as it did on the ethnology and languages of Indian aboriginal tribes. They gave him materials for extending his knowledge of the Santals—an interesting race of hillmen described in Chapter IV. of the *Annals*. This discovery was also the basis of his second work, the "*Comparative Dictionary*," and it led to the closest and most fruitful friendship of his life. But he

<sup>1</sup> Engineer of the great Ganges Canal, one of the few useful public works undertaken during the H.E.I. Company's *régime*, during which it used to be said that when the English abandoned India the only traces of their stay would be millions of empty beer-bottles. He was an original member of the India Council and died in 1871.



also found time for the enjoyment of the intellectual feast afforded by London in the merry month of May. His diary for 18th May records:—

Saw Tom Carlyle at Chelsea.<sup>1</sup> Disappointed with him. His talk one long bitter cry against modern England. Called at the India Office, and had a most interesting hour with Melville, Under-Secretary of State, who has directed the Registrar to give me every help with the Records on my return to England. Then to the National Gallery. Deeply impressed with the contrast between Claude and Turner.

The intention alluded to of quitting England was the result of well-founded anxiety on the score of health. Neuralgic fits grew more frequent, and the severe labour of examining masses of discoloured manuscript led to a recrudescence of the extreme weakness which had driven Hunter from India. A medical attendant recommended foreign travel as a means of giving the employment for which a busy brain craved without the exhaustion produced by absorbing work. On 20th May, therefore, the Hunters left their little son in Mrs. Murray's care and set out on a prolonged Continental tour. It began with Paris, then in the throes of the second Universal Exhibition,<sup>2</sup> and Hunter took great delight in showing his young wife the scenes of the old student days. Here they met Mr. Alfred Lancaster, who was enjoying the unrivalled art training that Paris affords, and who thus describes their first meeting:—

In the summer of 1867 I was staying at a small hotel near the Boulevard Montmartre. Paris was very full, and the company at mine inn was, to say the least of it, rather mixed. One evening, at table d'hôte, I saw a young couple who were evidently newcomers, and though they chanced to be sitting at the other end of the room, I noticed them particularly because they seemed to be uncertain as to what queer corner of the world they had got into. So much did this impress me that, after dinner, I went over and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Murray was probably the last man to call his old crony Carlyle "Tom," and his son-in-law unconsciously imitated him.

<sup>2</sup> I visited this World's Fair during the same month, and well do I remember the brave show made by its series of concentric ovals roofed with glass. The advantage of this ground-plan was the ease with which any exhibit could be found. The Second Empire was then hastening to its fall; and a feeling of unrest pervaded Paris which reacted on the success of the exhibition. Englishmen, however, had much to learn from it—the hideousness of their domestic furniture and the vulgarity of their art were placed beyond gainsay.



spoke to the husband, and in less than a quarter of an hour we were friends. During our stay in Paris we saw a great deal of each other. We had at least one thing in common, we were all young and had the world before us. But, apart from that very big fact, there was to me an exceptional amount of interest attaching to Hunter and his wife. As I look back I realise, perhaps more fully than I did at the time, the singular charm of manner that he had in those early days and always kept. Friendly, frank, warm-hearted are the adjectives that come most readily to my mind, and equally simple, unselfish, and devoted are epithets then, and now, most characteristic of Lady Hunter.<sup>1</sup>

From Paris they journeyed through the Vosges to Neuchâtel, Geneva,<sup>2</sup> over the Simplon, where they tarried at the famous hospice, and the young wife charmed the monks with her performance on the organ, to Arona, Novara, and Milan. After a very brief stay amid the artistic glories of Florence they reached Rome at the height of the imposing ceremonies inaugurated by Pius IX. to celebrate the eighteenth Centenary of St. Peter's martyrdom. Hunter's reverence for the past and the poetry which tinged his character were deeply stirred by the grandeur displayed by the Papal Government, so soon to be swept away. Nor was he less affected a few weeks later by the tale of a mighty civilisation entombed which Pompeii tells, and the relics of a still wider culture which survive to mock the tawdry present at Athens.<sup>3</sup> Constantinople was reached by sea, and there Hunter received especial kindness from the British Embassy, with ready help in his inquiries on the land tenures and the press regulations current in the Ottoman Empire. From poor, decayed Byzantium the pair travelled to Varna, and so up the Danube to Buda-Pesth, returning to London in mid-August, by way of Dresden, Berlin, and Hamburg. The impressions left by these wanderings were profound and lasting, and are seen in broader views of human

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the author, dated 30th October 1900. Throughout this tour the mornings were devoted to journalistic work. Hunter also made a collection of the laws governing the Press in every country through which he passed (Diary).

<sup>2</sup> He got some curious details of Swiss rural economy from a young proprietor whom he met at Geneva. The rent of vineyards was then sixty francs per acre; of cornlands, eighty francs. A labourer earned two francs a day with a dinner of soup, bread, and wine; mechanics four francs, finding themselves.

<sup>3</sup> The Hunters sailed from Naples on 7th July in the Messageries' steamer *Pausilippe*, which is branded as "most uncomfortable" in the Diary.



nature and of the policy which guides alien communities. They now settled down in lodgings at 81 Cambridge Terrace, that haven of refuge for so many Anglo-Indians on furlough, and the delvings in the India Office Library were resumed. But the fatigue and excitement of so prolonged a tour with the constant strain of press-work superadded, produced the inevitable reaction. On 12th August, Hunter was seized with high fever attended by constant vomiting. On the 20th he had recovered sufficiently to enjoy an airing in an invalid chair, but the physical prostration continued.<sup>1</sup> To return to India in such a state was manifestly impossible, and he had no difficulty in obtaining an extension of furlough for nine months. The bracing air of the east coast of Scotland was prescribed, and on the 20th the family speeded by express to Eyemouth. Here a pleasant and profitable month was spent in lodgings secured for them by the Bells. Health soon returned in the splendid autumn climate of East Berwickshire, and great progress was made in re-casting the history.

Amid his intense preoccupation in the *Annals* Hunter found leisure for treating subjects not directly related to that masterpiece. His famine articles in the deceased *Day* and the *North British Quarterly Review* had been liberally distributed among friends. Amongst them were Sir Cecil Beadon who had resigned the thorny crown of Bengal, and Mr. R. Barclay Chapman, who had shared in the obloquy lavished on his chief for their failure to gauge the full measure of distress in Orissa. The latter's reply is interesting as a masterly defence of his action during the crisis of the preceding year, and as revealing the gulf which separates the ideals of Indian administrators a generation back from those of Lord Curzon and Sir Antony MacDonnell. He wrote from 8 Chowringhee Road, Calcutta:—

I have no doubt that your articles will let a little light upon the subject of our proceedings which is much wanted. I cannot, however, agree with you that Government could, by an alliance with the press of India, obtain any more justice at its hands, unless, indeed, some of the members of the Administration were

<sup>1</sup> During this illness the patient read five Waverley Novels, a life of Lord Cornwallis, Colebrooke's "Indian Races," and Hall's "Kanauj Kfngs" in "Asiatic Researches," 6960 pages in all (Diary).



admitted free of the confraternity of the pencil. Even they, I take it, would find it hard work. There are conditions not a few that render it certain that the Indian Press will always be hostile to Government. First, as it was quaintly remarked while we were writhing under some unmerited evisceration, "people in India will have curry with their rice," and editors are continually on the hunt for something spicy, regardless of the fact that what is fun to them is torture to their victims. Secondly, the Government, disguise it as you will, is an absolute Government, a thing abhorred by Englishmen, no matter how timorously and carefully it may exercise its powers. Thank you for your *North British Quarterly Review* article, which I daresay did good service. Your Education Report was also most interesting. I don't know whether you are inclined, or in a position to stem the torrent of abuse that is likely to be poured on us over the Famine Report and the Government Despatches. Both of them are most humiliating, the latter especially. The fact is, that the Government of India has meanly sacrificed its officers to an ignorant outcry, and I fear in the hope of saving itself. The truth about the famine may be told in a few words and needed, as far as the servants of Government are concerned, no elaborate investigation. We did not know that the scarcity in Orissa would assume the proportions of famine. We had, of course, reports and suggestions of varying intensity; but, rightly or wrongly, the judgment of the higher authorities who were responsible for their action was not convinced of the necessity for abnormal measures. This would not have been of much importance if nothing more had been required of us than had been undertaken in other famines in India. We did all that. But it is asserted that we ought to have attempted the extraordinary and unprecedented operation of feeding a whole population. It is the combination of these two points which caused our failure, if we failed. Had nothing more than what accorded with well-known rules been required, our want of prophetic power would have been no harm at all.

Poor Beadon is, of course, much distressed at the turn things have taken. It is cruelly hard on him that the labours of a lifetime should be ignored on account of a visitation of God with the origin of which he had nothing in the world to do, and to meet which he did his best. The officers of Government will take precious good care to incur no responsibility in future. I myself witnessed a grant of £10,000 on that ground, though the granter avowed that he thought it unnecessary.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Cecil Beadon's acknowledgment of his young colleague's generous help is hearty enough. While smarting under the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Mr. R. Barclay Chapman, of the Board of Revenue, L.P., dated Calcutta, 4th May 1867.



stabs dealt him by critics who would probably have failed as signally had they been as severely tried, he wrote:—

I have read with much pleasure your defence of my Government's action in the *N. B. Quarterly* and the *Day*, and I feel very much indebted to you for endeavouring to dispel the clouds of misrepresentation and prejudice by which the British public have been misled. At present the tide is strong against us; but eventually the truth will no doubt prevail, and instead of being held responsible for the sad mortality which occurred, we shall be thought entitled to no small degree of praise for doing all that, under the circumstances, was possible.<sup>1</sup>

This view was naturally optimistic, but there was much truth in the plea put forward by the Bengal Government that they had attempted things undreamt of by their predecessors. How the awful famine of 1770 was treated is told with convincing power in the second chapter of the *Annals*. Mr. J. O'B. Saunders thus describes the measures undertaken by the North-Western Provinces during a similar crisis which occurred in 1837-38:—

You cannot say too much of the apathy and neglect of the local Government of the day, nor of the cruel heedlessness and oppression of the Allahabad Board of Revenue and the majority of the district Collectors. No one except Mansel<sup>2</sup> thought of the necessity of charitable relief, or of risking his own reputation with Government by proposing any broad measures whatever. One of his brother Collectors remarked to me that no man dared to do what Mansel had done, and that it was only his great character that carried him through the storm unscathed. Mr., now Sir Robert Hamilton, the Commissioner of Agra, opposed Mansel throughout. At one of the meetings of the Charitable Relief Committee he was in the chair, and actually proposed to cease feeding the starving paupers in order that they might be driven to work, inasmuch as, in his opinion, they were malingering! This was to condemn at least 90,000 poor wretches to death. Mansel rose to his feet, indignant at the hectoring of this Jack-in-Office, and said, "Sir, carry that language to your nursery, where you are an autocrat. Here you are among men who are consulting

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 22nd August 1867. The writer's failure to deal promptly and adequately with famine is paralleled by his blundering in Bhutan and the Assam tea districts. He was one of the many Anglo-Indian officials who did good work in the Secretariat, but, knowing men only from dockets, showed impotence as ruler. He retired with an irretrievably damaged reputation in 1866, and died in 1881.

<sup>2</sup> He was then Collector of Agra.



on the most momentous question—the life or death of myriads; and we will not submit to such dictation.” This was pretty plain speaking from a young Collector to his official superior, a Commissioner of great influence. The rains of 1837 failed, and the newspapers of the day loudly warned the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, of the consequences. We all preached to deaf ears; and the outcome was something frightful. At Agra and Mathura alone, where relief measures began to work in December, 1200 died daily; and though 200,000 were fed, still the mortality showed no signs of decreasing. I wrote an appeal to the public in January 1838 in the form of a “Diary of an Invalid on the journey down the Ganges from Mirat to Allahabad.”<sup>1</sup> This aroused all India, and Relief Committees were formed immediately in Calcutta. But it was too late; we had no railways nor river-steamers, and the affected districts were now cut off, as was Orissa twenty years later. The tardy action of Government and the constant hope that things were not so bad as they appeared to be, prevented all useful measures. Lord Auckland, then on tour, was obliged to break up his camp to avoid drawing the famine-stricken districts. Wheat went up to seven seers per rupee,<sup>2</sup> and all who depended on fixed salaries felt the pressure. But the blackest misery arose from want of employment for the agricultural population. There were grain and food in store, but the land was like stone, and neither spade nor plough could make any impression in it. Hence the awful misery of 1837. The crowds of starving wretches who poured into our provinces from the native States added to our burdens.

In the famine the land settlement of John Thurston, the renowned one carried out by Thomason and Bird, broke down and the new petty proprietors were ruined by feeble Collectors who could not withstand pressure from Government. The Commissioner of Aligarh ordered the district officers to screw as much revenue out of the people as they could, and that those who could not pay were to be left as a residuum and dealt with thereafter. Tyler, at Mathura, compelled all his great zemindars to pay up, but was lenient to his small fry, accepting his demands in instalments. Thus the spendthrift and the improvident escaped while careful men were ruined, stock, lock, and barrel. Mansel alone, at Agra, had the courage to notify that one-half of the Government demand would be remitted in the case of all, so long as the zemindars did their duty by the small farmers and ryots, to whom a corresponding allowance was to be made. The Board of Revenue was confounded, but had the grace to submit. Other districts were not so lucky. The small proprietors, screwed down and oppressed by zealous tahsildars,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in a note at p. 41 of the “Annals of Rural Bengal.”

<sup>2</sup> Rather more than 1½d. per lb.

<sup>3</sup> Native subaltern agents employed in collecting revenue.



involved themselves hopelessly in order to meet the demands made upon them. Such wholesale oppression was never perpetrated in India, and in comparison with it the story of Orissa reads like one of sympathy and beneficence. The mild, kind-hearted Lord Auckland never grasped the truth. I heard him say in March or April 1838 that the country was pulling round, and he went cheerfully on his China expedition. I don't know what the Mutiny did for this landless class, but I think that some of them retrieved their own after murdering the interlopers. But the North-West Provinces have not yet recovered from the calamity of 1837. Thousands of small proprietors are now labouring coolies or professional badmashes.<sup>1</sup>

So convinced was Hunter that he had grasped the lesson of 1866 that he sent the MSS. of the *Annals* which dealt with the Orissa famine to Mr. George Campbell, who was President of the Commission appointed to inquire into the causes of that catastrophe. That these views were distasteful to Mr. Campbell is shown by Mr. R. B. Chapman's letter; but it is refreshing to find from his replies to Hunter that he appreciated the labour given to a thorny subject, and had the candour to send a copy of Hunter's famine narrative to the Government of India.<sup>2</sup>

On 1st October the splendid air of Eyemouth had done its work, and Hunter, restored to health and vigour, left it for Lasswade, where he took possession of a house named Broomhill, near Dr. Murray's residence at Elmbank. His manner of life there is thus recorded in his diary:—

As soon as it becomes light a cup of tea and a slice of toast are served with the *Scotsman* in bed. Thereafter I rise, bathe, and set to work on either the *Annals* or an article for the Indian Press. This lasts till noon, when we have a Continental *déjeuner*; and then I drive with my wife and son, or ride on the mountain or sea

<sup>1</sup> Badma'ash, a useful Persian word which deserves naturalisation. It means "swashbuckler" and "professional criminal." Mr. Saunders' letter is undated.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 45-55, "*Annals of Rural Bengal*." Sir George Campbell's work as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has never received the credit which it deserved. Darkness is often thickest under the lantern; and Bengal, in spite of its proximity to Calcutta, the seat of the Supreme Government, was the most backward of satrapies before his vigorous and far-seeing rule. He gave the Lower Provinces primary education, a tolerably efficient police, and the means of creating a network of roads. But he was pachydermatous, and wanted humour, and these defects told heavily against him when he entered Parliament after retiring from India.



shore till three. Then work again till five, when my wife has a cup of tea, then work again till seven, our dinner hour. After dinner, music in the drawing-room while I am writing. My wife plays to me half the day on the piano or harmonium; Broughton building castles on the floor with Benares bricks. . . . Our establishment consists of a footman, a gardener at the lodge (paid for in the rent), a cook, and a housemaid, who is also nurse. One horse and a wagonette like a mail phaeton.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lancaster, who spent a few weeks with his friends in December and January, describes Broomhill as—

A pleasant house shared by the Hunters with a large horse, which lived in a coal cellar, but did plenty of work. He generally drove out for hours every afternoon. The concluding chapters of his great work were then flowing rapidly from his pen.<sup>2</sup>

So rapidly indeed that on the 20th November Hunter was able to send John Purves of Balliol the first two chapters for revision. The task was a heavy one, for his friend wrote:—

A sweet youth you are, first to send me such a pile of stuff, and then to demand it back immediately, just as if no one else had anything to do here! I find it extremely interesting; but be on your guard against an excess of the sentimental, and remember that the repressed style goes down best in England.<sup>3</sup>

On 25th November Messrs. Smith & Elder, to whom Hunter had been introduced by Mr. J. O'B. Saunders, agreed to produce a small edition of the *Annals* on the half-profits system. Nine days later the first hundred pages of manuscript was in the hands of the printers, Messrs. Murray & Gibb, of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> Thenceforward the double task of recasting the official narrative and correcting proofs was interrupted only by periodical attacks of neuralgia, the result of overwork. So determined was the author that his book should embody the latest fruits of linguistic research, that he cancelled two entire chapters after they had been set up in type. His diary shows the labour and vexation involved.

<sup>1</sup> Diary of October 15 and 20, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the author, dated 30th October 1900.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of 22nd November 1867.

<sup>4</sup> The firm was founded by Hunter's father-in-law, Dr. Thomas Murray, who held the office of Queen's Printers for Scotland.



20th January 1868.—John Purves, who is staying here, is coaching me in the latest lights of German philology—Schleicher and Curtius.<sup>1</sup>

21st January.—Re-writing Chapter III. The sheet to be broken up—a sad loss.

23rd January.—Re-writing Chapter IV., the philological part, in accordance with the new lights. A disheartening business, after the whole thing had been printed off.

He found solace, however, in the keen mountain air and literature combined. "Don Quixote" was a constant favourite, and on the 26th he had—

A long solitary ride to Habbie's Howe. Delightful hours among the hills, reading Reuter's "In the Year 13," from the Platt Deutsch,<sup>2</sup> my horse grazing by my side.

At length, on 7th March, the task was done, and Hunter marked this pause in his labours by a dinner, at which his friend Mr. Thomas Gribble, then at home on furlough, was not the least honoured guest. A few days later detailed instructions were given to the publishers as to the distribution of "advance copies."

The first volume will be out in a few days. I am under an obligation to the Bengal Government to furnish 190 copies to them at cost price. But, fortunately for us, these cannot be sent to India for six weeks or two months, so that they will not interfere with the sale of the work at home. I wish it to have every chance, and to this end suggest that it should be liberally distributed to the leading reviews and weeklies, besides, of course, the London daily papers. It taps unexplored material, and gives a new interpretation to Indian history. The scholars who have watched its progress and seen the proof-sheets believe that the series of which it forms the introduction will render important service to the Empire. Whether that series will be proceeded with depends in no small degree on the amount of recognition which the present volume receives. . . . The first edition consists of 675 copies or thereabouts; but the work has been stereotyped, so that if it obtains any success a second edition may be brought out on the chance of selling even a small number of copies.

<sup>1</sup> Schleicher wrote a "Compendium of the Grammars of Indo-Germanic Languages," Weimar, 1866; and Curtius the "Elements of Greek Etymology," Leipzig, 1866. "From their perusal," wrote Hunter in his Diary, "dates a new era in my life."

<sup>2</sup> In a list of books read, entitled "Good company I keep," this work is criticised as "wanting in constructive art, but touching, with a few strokes of real humour."



Having done for his bantling all that labour and foresight could accomplish, the harassed author felt the necessity of a little relaxation. This was obtained by a riding tour, undertaken in the joyous company of Thomas Gribble. Leaving Lasswade on the 16th March, the pair visited Dunfermline, Dunblane, the Bridge of Allan, and the Trossachs, revelling in the scenery and the relics of the past offered in such profusion by Western Scotland. The convalescent paid a penalty for these exertions in a severe attack of neuralgia, which prostrated him at a wayside inn. But, disregarding his companion's advice to tarry a while, he pushed on, breakfastless, in a blinding storm, to find that his old enemy yielded to exercise and change of scene. The friends separated at Glasgow, and Hunter rode back to Lasswade, to await the impression produced by the Annals.

The first man of mark to acknowledge the receipt of the book was Professor Max Müller, who wrote from Park End, Oxford:—

*April 10, 1868.*

I have to thank you for the "Annals of Rural Bengal," which I have read with great interest. It is a mighty undertaking to write the history of a people rather than their rulers. It is so in civilised countries, even in England. How much more in India! A work of this kind will not, perhaps, interest people who cannot bear history unless it is brought before them in the form of a sensation novel,<sup>1</sup> but it will be of great advantage to the political economist and the statesman. The Santals, of whom you give so interesting an account, have puzzled me for a long time. Their language is not Dravidian, nor is their physical appearance, as far as I can judge from sources accessible to me. . . . That an agglutinative speech may become inflectional seems to be proved by theirs. It is quite evident in Turkish and Finnish, and in this respect I consider Schleicher as far behind Humboldt. Languages are not, from the first, cast in moulds, but they pass on through successive grammatical latitudes until their growth is arrested by literary culture.

The great critic grasped the true inwardness of this epoch-making work. Its author broke ground in an untrodden field, where he was followed by John Richard Green.<sup>2</sup> The Annals

<sup>1</sup> This is, I am afraid, an allusion to Macaulay's "History of England."

<sup>2</sup> The "Short History of the British People," by Mr. Green (1837-83) appeared in 1874. No one can compare its general plan with the "Annals of Rural Bengal" and deny the influence of the earlier work.



were much more than a catalogue of the deeds of public men in whose shame and glory the masses had no share. With the divination of genius the author penetrated the inner life of the obscure myriads born to toil and suffer. He depicted the anarchy which brooded over India after the utter ruin of the Mughal Empire, the groping efforts to restore law and order made by the British adventurers who assumed the fallen diadem. Mistakes bred of ignorance, and calamities the bitter fruit of chaotic social conditions, were unsparingly disclosed. The aboriginal races of India, spurned and oppressed by the proud Aryan invaders of a long past age, found in him a sympathetic advocate. When the historian descends from the realms of philosophy and statecraft to portray the strange human types evolved by Western civilisation as understood in the eighteenth century, we recognise the hand of a master who clothes these antique fossils with vigorous life. And this pregnant matter is couched in a style which shows no trace of immaturity, no note of provincialism, which rises at times to the highest eloquence, and is always replete with grace and dignity. Right well did Hunter's first plunge into the arena of authorship redeem the early promise of his life—to bring India closer to the English heart. The book came indeed as a revelation to home-staying Britons for whom their Eastern Empire was a mere abstraction. Within a few weeks of its appearance the general apathy received a curious illustration in the House of Commons, where 258 members divided on the question of foreshores, but not twenty-nine remained to discuss the Indian Councils Bill.<sup>1</sup> But the great lessons taught by the "Annals of Rural Bengal" were taken to heart by a nation which is slow to act on new impressions. It is not enough to give our great dependency peace and equal laws, to conquer pestilence and famine. We must teach our fellow-subjects to protect themselves in the intensified struggle for life to which the very blessings of our rule have exposed them.

The Annals were published in London on 4th April 1868, and a week later the *Glasgow Herald* led off the chorus of

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr. James Hutton, dated 16th June 1868. He had been editor of the *Indian Daily News*, and was afterwards a journalist of note at home.



praise with which it was greeted by the entire press. This initial notice moved the admiration of Dr. John Muir, by reason of the rare knowledge of the subject shown by the writer, who was none other than Hunter's old college friend, Mr. Richard Vary Campbell.<sup>1</sup> His good opinion gave joy to the young writer as a presage of greater successes to come. On the 17th April he paid a visit to Hawick, spending some days at Heron Hill, the residence of his favourite uncle, Mr. George Wilson. Here his mother was staying, and her inbred reticence was conquered by the pride she felt at her brilliant son's success. The warmth of the maternal greeting impressed Hunter as did the luxury with which his relatives surrounded themselves.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

April 20, 1868.

What I especially admire is the substantial way in which my uncles set up their families. If a son marries, a house is built for him. For the young medico a practice is bought; for the civil engineer a connection must be formed; to mercantile sons partnerships are given. They have a full house here, a dozen or fourteen grown up people round the breakfast table. . . . My uncle George seems to be perpetual Provost of Hawick. He is now in his third period of three years. His place, Heron Hill, is a noble specimen of domestic architecture; the stone and lime cost £12,000, besides a beautiful conservatory with a large palm-tree in the middle, vineries, &c. The billiard-room is a gem, with Leech's sporting pictures in water-colours and other prints of the young man style.

The broad current of family life at Hawick evidently suggested Oaken Holt, the beautiful home which he made for himself near Oxford, and which witnessed the last scene of his laborious life.

It was during this stay at Heron Hill that a recognition came of the high value of the *Annals* which stirred their writer to his inmost depths. This was a review which appeared in the *Spectator* of 18th April from the pen of its editor, Mr. Meredith Townsend, which began:—

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<sup>1</sup> The very voluminous correspondence for 1868 discloses some curious secrets of the reviewers' trade in the happy times ere the periodical deluges of literature set in which swamp so many works of merit. One writer told Hunter that a certain London daily paper made it an invariable rule never to notice Messrs. Smith & Elder's publications. Another informed him that a Scotch journal reviewed books only when specially requested to do so by the author or publisher.



Mr. W. W. Hunter of the Bengal Civil Service is a most impertinent and presuming person. What right has he, a mere competition-wallah<sup>1</sup> of some seven years' standing, without Indian connection or a grandfather in the India House, who won his appointment by an examination open to any competent blacksmith, to write Indian history with the insight of Colonel Tod and the research of Mr. Duff,<sup>2</sup> in prose almost as good as that of Mr. Froude? It is a most unwarrantable proceeding, one fatal to all the traditions of a service which has hitherto believed, with some reason, that eloquence and scholarship were monopolies of the elder and more exclusive caste, the caste with cousins and grandfathers. . . . If Mr. Hunter does not ultimately compel recognition from the world as an historian of the very first class, of the class to which not a score of Englishmen have belonged, we entirely mistake our trade. We never remember to have heard his name before in our lives; he has no administrative reputation, and he can scarcely be thirty or thirty-two years of age;<sup>3</sup> but, unless the book is, as occasionally happens, an exceptional or accidental effort, Mr. Hunter's name will one day be a household word among those who are interested in Asiatic history.

This hearty appreciation of his labours reached Hunter, as he wrote in a folio volume containing the reviews of the *Annals*—

While I was at a public meeting on Irish Church Disestablishment with my uncles Walter and George. It fairly took away my breath, and forced me to hurry out of the room, and walk up and down in the dark rainy street for several minutes before I could recover myself.

Mr. Townsend showed remarkable prescience in his public utterances, which he repeated in a letter addressed to Mr. John Sherer, one of Hunter's colleagues on the staff of the *Englishman*.

I have not a shadow of doubt that Mr. Hunter will one day be a historian of the first class. No book on Indian history anything as good as his has been issued for many years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Townsend alludes to Sir George Trevelyan's brilliant sketch of a young Indian civilian's life, "The Competition-Wallah," which appeared in 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel James Tod (1782-1835) was the author of four bulky quartos entitled "The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan," which were published in 1829-32, and are now more frequently quoted than read. He was one of the many able men who have been driven from India by a jealous and narrow-minded bureaucracy. Mr. James Grant-Duff (1789-1858) wrote a "History of the Mahrattas" (1826). His fame has been eclipsed by that of his son, the Right Hon. Sir M. E. Grant-Duff.

<sup>3</sup> He was only twenty-seven.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of 20th April 1868.



The note struck by the *Spectator* was that of the entire press. *The Times* gave two special articles to his book; the *Westminster Review* made it the text of a luminous discourse on Indian requirements which extended over thirty-six pages. Mr. Robert Giffen<sup>1</sup> proclaimed in the *Fortnightly Review* that he had applied the philosophic method of writing history to a new field. The monthly magazines discoursed of the Santals as of a newly discovered race, and brought the horrors of an Indian famine home to a public which was profoundly ignorant of their distant fellow-subjects. The French reviews were as laudatory as our own. Never was a literary triumph so sudden and so complete.

There is no better indication of character than the manner in which a man comports himself under the strokes of fortune. Hunter's first thoughts on "waking up to find himself famous" were for the helpmeet to whom he owed life itself.

#### TO MRS. HUNTER.

I am afraid you over-estimate my talents, but, as you say, our success in life is now a *fait accompli*. The *Spectator* review was most favourable, perhaps the most favourable that has ever appeared of the first work of an unknown man. I certainly have seen nothing like it. But I know the faults of the book, my love, and so the kindness of my critics in not spying them out will do me no harm. Yes, sweet, you had a hand in the book. But for you it would never have been written; but for you it would never have been published. The writer would by this time be a thing of the past.

He returned to Lasswade on the 23rd of April, and, after a short stay among his admiring friends in Glasgow, went southwards to visit Mr. T. Gribble at The Frenches, Redhill. His letters to Mrs. Hunter are full of natural exultation at the continued pæans sung by the press.

May 7, 1868.

I have just seen Mr. John Sherer, who is going to give a literary party at the Club,<sup>2</sup> and Mr. John Muir who has written a

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Robert Giffen, K.C.B., one of the first statisticians of our time.

<sup>2</sup> The Oriental Club to which Hunter had been introduced by Mr. J. O'B. Saunders. In those days it was a sleepy hollow where superannuated "Qui Hyes" dragged out an existence embittered by regrets. Thackeray used to



most flattering letter about me to Sir Henry Rawlinson, on whom I mean to call to-morrow. Messrs. Smith & Elder tell me that the *Annals* are to be reviewed in two of the great French monthlies. I hear, too, that the *Saturday* is to hold forth this week.

May 8, 1868.

I was sorry to be so curt yesterday. I see that this morning's *Saturday Review* has not noticed me, probably because it is taken up with "Old Deccan Days." This appeared some months ago, and Sir Bartle Frere is an old man, I a young one, so I can afford to wait. . . . Last night I slept in chambers opposite the Club. Breakfasted late, and then to Sir Henry Rawlinson, who had a very bad cold and could be interested in nothing. However, he is to introduce me to Lord Strangford, and the two are going to propose at a special meeting of the Asiatic Society that Government shall be asked to help me at home to conclude my researches. I want only four months.<sup>1</sup>

tell a good story of this Club, which he joined in order to pick up a little local colouring for his "Newcomes." He was for a long time perplexed by the continual rumbling which pervaded the building. It stands in a *cul-de-sac*, so that this was not due to passing vehicles. At last he discovered that it proceeded from old Indians growling about the inferiority of the curries.

<sup>1</sup> Hunter's furlough on medical certificate would expire at the end of August.



## CHAPTER IX

### A GIGANTIC TASK

THE researches alluded to in the preceding letter were connected with a task yet more laborious than the *Annals*. Among the documents found in Mr. Hodgson's trunks at the India Office were divers vocabularies of Indian aboriginal races, illustrating a pet theory of their compiler that the Himalayan tribes were racially identical with their congeners of the plains. An examination of this material inspired Hunter with a resolve to make it the basis of a work comparing the languages of Asiatic peoples which it was then the fashion to call Non-Aryan. He obtained from Dr. John Muir an introduction to the old scholar, and asked his sanction to the project. The reply was a cordial affirmative.

FROM MR. BRIAN H. HODGSON.

*November 1, 1867.*

I have your letter of to-day, in which you tell me that you have compared the MS. and printed papers in the India Office, and that you think that the whole of these *opuscula* deserve republication in a collective form. You propose to bring out an octavo volume of 500 pages, containing such of my papers as relate to Himalayan ethnology, with some additions from independent sources, and you add a sketch of the plan of your work under four heads. I have nothing to object to—everything to approve. I think myself very fortunate in obtaining so good an editor of my Himalayan researches, and trust that the same care may be applied to the other departments of my labours—labours in which for long years I spared neither purse nor person, and which, nevertheless, have been plagiarised and ignored in the same breath, too often in a way which would not have been ventured on but for the obscure methods of their publication.

Hardly were the *Annals* off Hunter's hands than he threw himself with characteristic ardour into the new project. He



found an eager and consistent friend in Mr. Hodgson, who procured for his *protégé* the membership of the Royal Asiatic Society, and persuaded that body to intervene officially so that Hunter might not be compelled to leave England for India with his linguistic researches incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

He introduced him to Dr. R. Rost,<sup>2</sup> who rendered essential service towards the compilation of the Dictionary, and to many other scholars who were equally helpful in their degree. On learning that his friend contemplated producing the Dictionary from his own resources, he undertook to share the expense under certain conditions and bombarded the India Council with applications for its patronage.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State could not withstand pressure from so constant a suitor, and Hunter learnt to his joy that his furlough would be extended for four months in order that he might bring out his Dictionary, and that a goodly number of copies of the work and of the Annals would be purchased by the State.

Thus relieved of apprehensions which weighed heavily on his spirits he was able to enjoy the noontide of success. His letters to Mrs. Hunter from London enable us to follow the emotions called forth by a triumph which comes to few men so early in life:—

May 10, 1868.

The disappointment about the *Saturday Review* yesterday has been amply atoned for by to-day's letters. There was first Mr. Fiske's<sup>4</sup> note about the American edition, which has drawn forth from me twelve pages by return of post. Then a note from Sir F. Currie, Member of the India Council, saying that the Office had taken the largest number of copies of the Annals they ever

<sup>1</sup> This was an honour for which there was but one precedent—that of Sir Henry Rawlinson, the Assyriologist (1810–1895), in whose case the Royal Asiatic Society petitioned for an extension of leave to enable him to publish the result of his explorations.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Reinhold Rost (1822–1896) was afterwards Librarian at the India Office. He stood second only to Sir William Jones as a linguist.

<sup>3</sup> Hodgson wrote on 16th November 1868 to Sir F. Currie, Member of the India Council: "If I had a son going out in the Civil Service, I would put the Annals into his hand as the surest method of interesting his head and heart in the people of India. To know them is to love them, but to know them is very difficult." It is much to be regretted that this admirable book has never been prescribed as part of the special training of selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service, who still waste their time in cramming masses of useless information.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Stafford Fiske was then Consul for the United States at Leith.



take.<sup>1</sup> He was so pleased with the book that he had made Sir Stafford Northcote<sup>2</sup> promise to read it, and he hoped to get the Council to purchase a large number more for circulation in India. Before the week is out I shall be able to order a second edition.

Do you know we are on the eve of a great success? Yesterday I was closeted with Sir F. Currie, Mr. E. B. Eastwick, and Mr. Kaye for several hours. These men, especially the Members of Council, deal with me as with one from whom they expect great things, and of whom they intend to make something.

May 13.

This morning I breakfasted with Wyllie,<sup>3</sup> Under-Secretary in the Foreign Department. At two, Sir Cecil Beadon is to call for me at the Club. I have a confab., too, with the Head of the British Museum, from which great results may come. On Thursday I breakfast and spend the forenoon with Sir Bartle Frere<sup>4</sup> and then call on Heeley.<sup>5</sup> In the evening I dine with the Walter Bagehots, who have asked a number of notable Anglo-Indians to meet me. On Friday I breakfast with a famous Orientalist, Mr. Hyde Clarke. Yesterday I attended a meeting of the Asiatic Society. Lord Strangford in the anniversary address twice alluded to me in the most flattering terms. My work has been given a paragraph to itself in the Annual Report.

[N. D.]

Only a moment to say that all goes on well. I spent a couple of hours with Lord Strangford<sup>6</sup> this morning. He seems anxious to help me in the Comparative Dictionary, and the countenance of so distinguished a scholar would be invaluable.

On 20th May he wrote from the British Museum:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

I am engaged here to-day and hope to add to the value of my Dictionary by acting on hints given me by Mr. Watts, successor to your Papa's friend Panizzi. I am to employ a German scholar to

<sup>1</sup> They eventually purchased 120 copies.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of State for India, afterwards the Earl of Iddesleigh (1818-1887).

<sup>3</sup> Mr. John Wyllie, a brilliant young Indian diplomat, died at the age of thirty-four in 1870. Hunter edited his "Essays on the External Policy of India," with a memoir, in 1875.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Bartle E. Frere, afterwards Governor of Bombay, &c. (1815-1884).

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Wilfred L. Heeley was one of the knot of very able men who gained Civil Service appointments at the first open competition. The high promise of his career was cut short by his death, to the lasting regret of his friends.

<sup>6</sup> The eighth and last Viscount Strangford (1826-1869) was a philologist of high merit. His friend, Sir M. E. Grant-Duff, wrote of him that he was "unique," and that he "left a place in journalism which has never been supplied."



draw up a Comparative Dictionary of six Turanian languages, which is to be incorporated with my other vocabularies.

Do you know I have visited all the sweet spots near the fountains and under the elms in Hyde Park which you and Broughton made so doubly dear to me? I even looked for traces of our dear boy's wee fire that he made on the grass last August, but the spring verdure had obliterated them. I have not had time to visit Cambridge Terrace, but I often look fondly up the entrance to it from the Park. This morning after breakfast, the Lancasters took me with them to Kensington Gardens, where we came to anchor in arm-chairs. But, after a little, I said good-bye to them, and walked on alone to the charming slope by the fountains where you and I and Broughton used to sit. I remembered how good you were to me in those dark days, and how feebly I used to crawl about with my chair. A sense of my old weakness came on me, and I shed a wee private tear.

May 21.

I breakfasted this morning with Sir Bartle Frere and his daughters. He has asked me to submit a scheme for an Indian official paper like the French *Moniteur*, which he is to show the Secretary of State and then send on to the Viceroy.

The fruit of this interview was the following letter:—

TO SIR BARTLE FRERE.

May 21.

You have asked me to put on paper the information I collected last year, regarding the organisation and working of Government journals in Europe. . . . In England, where Government is conducted by parties, each has its own organ to announce its policy and defend its action. The only thing approaching a governmental mouthpiece here is *The Times*, and it partakes of that character only inasmuch as its editor is able to gather information from the principal actors on both sides of the House. It is this circumstance that gives such weight to the first leader in *The Times* during a political crisis. The rest of Europe is ruled by highly centralised bodies, and each has its representatives among the press. Everywhere the responsible and visible unit of Government has, and must have, a means of interpreting itself to the people. In India, as on the Continent, that unit is the central governing body, but it is at present destitute of any machinery for explaining its policy, defending its action and correcting misconception. Moreover, even in India there exist the rudiments of that government by parties which Englishmen carry with them wherever they go. Not only, therefore, is the Indian Administration unrepresented as a Government, but it is also unrepresented as a party in the State. The native interest has its organs, the



Anglo-Indian interest has its organs, the Government has none. Indian rulers, in fact, labour under two sets of disadvantages, those which the French Government would experience without a *Moniteur*, and those which an English Ministry would experience without the organs of the party to which it owes its devotion.

The Indian Government has endeavoured to remedy this defect by various devices. I shall afterwards have occasion to advert to the plan adopted during the years preceding the Mutiny; at present I will briefly enumerate the methods I have seen in operation since India passed directly under the Crown. Mr. James Wilson carried with him to the East a practical acquaintance with the literary requirements of an administration. It seemed to him that an official organ was a necessity of our position in India, and he gets the credit for having given, for a time, some degree of efficiency to the two half-measures by which the Government tries to make up for the absence of an acknowledged mouthpiece. One of these was the "Editor's Room," an apartment in which State papers of general interest were laid out for perusal by gentlemen connected with the press. The other was the publication of such documents still effected, after a fashion, by means of the papers printed at the end of the Gazette. Both of these plans were inadequate from the first, and both became useless, and worse than useless, when the strong will that had for a time overcome the traditional reticence of the Secretariats ceased to be felt. Editors gave up going to a room where they found nothing but departmental reports and tabular statements of merely local importance. Judging from the samples which used to appear at the end of the *Calcutta Gazette*, one would suppose that the most interesting, if not the only State papers known to the Bengal Government were the returns of chinchona cultivation. It is difficult to conceive how either of these methods could be made to work satisfactorily. The peculiar disadvantage attaching to them is that when Government, with the means of interpreting itself, says nothing, journalists conclude that it has nothing to say.

A third method has been to countenance, or at least not to discourage the connection of Government servants with the press. My own experience of this mode, and I have been engaged more or less permanently as a leader-writer upon several Indian publications, leads me to believe that, while pleasant and profitable to junior civilians, it is utterly useless as a means of interpreting policy. No Government could trust its motives to unrecognised and irresponsible writers, and very few seniors would deign to make use of such channels for reaching the public. While, therefore, the practice tends to introduce temperance in discussion and friendly relations between the public services and the press, the articles are generally written in haste and with a half-knowledge of the facts.



A fourth method is to permit Government servants to send letters to the daily papers. During the last few years this practice has obtained an alarming frequency, for the necessity of finding some authoritative means of expression has been making itself more strongly felt. Secretaries and minor officials of every class have put themselves at the mercy of editors, for, however forcibly a newspaper correspondent may write, the editor has power to reply, and to reply not merely once but again and again, after the impression created by the correspondent's arguments has passed off, by damaging sneers and indirect allusions, by changing the point at issue, and with all a leader-writer's artillery of fresh premises, unverified statistics, unsifted evidence, quotations without references, a show of public spirit, and the royal and editorial pronoun "We."

A fifth method remains. It consists in furnishing information, such as telegrams, public news, and occasional State papers to the press. The same causes which render the first two plans ineffectual deprive this of any practical utility as a means of interpretation, and to these causes are added other sources of embarrassment peculiar to itself. In point of fact it stimulates without satisfying a journalistic appetite of a very inconvenient kind. The more important periodicals in India have machinery of their own for obtaining State papers, machinery which tends to demoralise those who set it in motion and to make traitors of the poor tools by means of whom it is worked. It is not long since a whole Secretariat was threatened with dismissal in consequence of the publication of a document which I have reason to believe reached the editor through a channel quite different from the office on which the blow would have fallen, and the ease with which whole sets of papers, conspicuously those connected with the railway, could be obtained is a standing joke with Calcutta journalists. I cannot make use of information communicated in confidence, but I can positively assert that as long as it pays the Indian Press surreptitiously to get possession of State papers, the Indian Press will obtain them. It is no exaggeration to aver that all the efforts of the Indian Government to explain itself have less effect upon the Indian public, whether native or English, than the petty larcenies of clerks and compositors, the misrepresentations that are pieced together from an Under-Secretary's waste-paper basket, and the sweepings of the Public Offices.

After describing the different methods adopted by the Continental Governments in influencing the public press, Hunter proceeded to apply the mass of information acquired by him to the problem in India. He urged that the Government of that dependency should found a weekly official journal,



furnishing literary matter and intelligence of the highest order—

Its writing well-considered, authoritative, somewhat reticent, but at the same time bright and attractive; its information fresh and trustworthy. . . . The first requisite of an official organ is complete dependence on the Government. This can be secured by appointing one of the secretaries as editor, if such a man can be found who possesses the necessary qualifications and will accept the work as his staple employment in life. The Indian authorities have had some experience of what happens when a journal possessing a quasi-official character breaks away. During the decade before the Mutiny of 1857 a certain periodical was supposed to occupy this position, and public rumour still speaks of its editor's interviews with high officials. But divergence of interests arose in course of time, and the temporary connection only served to widen the breach. The second requisite is that the character of such an organ should be plainly avowed. All Governments which do not stand on a popular basis make use of mouthpieces in the press. That the Indian Government should do so is but an acknowledgment of the growing power of the fourth estate and of the non-official public. The third requisite is that its literary organisation should be that of a first-class journal. Every requirement may be met without invoking any startling novelty, but by means of existing machinery offered by the official Gazettes.

There was a sound basis for the views so lucidly expressed. The Indian Government's relations with local newspapers were a survival from the times when the press was securely muzzled by repeated ukases from Leadenhall Street, which had a monopolist's dread of unfettered public opinion. It affected to ignore a vast and growing influence, but its attitude was tempered by a fear of stinging criticism and of the furious agitations which periodically lash the Anglo-Indian community. Mr. Barclay Chapman's letter places the situation thus created in a clear light.<sup>1</sup> I may add that Hunter's letter was destined to bring about a better understanding between the Indian Administration and the public press. It came into the hands of the Secretary of State for India, who wrote:—

FROM SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.

July 31, 1868.

Sir Bartle Frere has given me a very good letter of yours on the subject of newspapers. Would you have any objection to my

<sup>1</sup> See p. 124.



sending a copy to Sir John Lawrence? You must also allow me to thank you for a very interesting book on rural Bengal. I have learnt a good deal from it.

Hunter, of course, desired nothing better. He wrote:—

*August 3.*

It gives me much pleasure that any effort of mine should have attracted your approval. The letter to which you refer is entirely at your disposal, and it will be a source of lasting gratification to me if it should, in however humble a degree, contribute to the removal of a source of incessant vexation to Indian administrators.

Hunter's masterly plea for the creation of an official organ was duly considered by the Viceroy, and Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr was sounded as to whether he would fill the editorial chair. But Lord Lawrence's "masterly inactivity" led him to shelve the thorny subject. On the advent of Lord Mayo the project was again revived, and its author was accepted as the mouth-piece of Government with the press of Upper India. In this difficult capacity Hunter was privileged to render splendid service to his chiefs without sacrificing an iota of that independence which is the breath of an honest journalist's nostrils. From his day dates the unwritten pact between the governing body and the Indian Press, which proscribes captious criticism and insists that the public shall be taken into the ruler's confidence on matters affecting their interests.

Hunter now paid a short visit to the beautiful city which afterwards became his home. The diary contains the following entries:—

*23rd May.*—Yesterday I came to Oxford. Was met by John Purves, and dined at the High Table at Balliol with Newman<sup>1</sup> and others. Rather a dull and pedantic company. To-day Purves took me over the colleges and their libraries. All Oxon in a stir about the new Bill which has just come down.<sup>2</sup> Coleridge, Roundell Palmer, Bob Lowe,<sup>3</sup> and others in the town. Balliol is a great centre of the Reformers, and Jowett is giving them a large party. Spent two hours with Max Müller.

<sup>1</sup> W. L. Newman, Fellow of Balliol College.

<sup>2</sup> A Bill for the extension and improvement of the University, brought in by Coleridge. It was discussed the same afternoon by a meeting held at the Clarendon Hotel, but was eventually dropped.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Taylor Coleridge, Judge (1790-1876). Roundell Palmer became Lord Chancellor and Earl of Selborne (1812-1895). "Bob Lowe" was afterwards Lord Sherbrooke.



24th May.—Balliol is being rebuilt, so I have to sleep at the Randolph, taking my meals in college. After breakfast Max Müller called, and I went with him to Moberley's Bampton Lecture. Struck with the Bidding Prayer for the Dead.<sup>1</sup>

From this seat of learning Hunter went to his new friend Hodgson's retreat at Alderley Grange, Wotton-under-Edge, and wrote thence to his wife, who was established in a pretty seaside villa at Dunoon, in Argyllshire.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

May 26, 1868.

I have just finished a memorandum on an Indian official organ for Sir Bartle Frere. We shall see if anything comes of it. But whether or no, it is always satisfying to have done a piece of difficult work. I am convinced that we have a bright future before us, but the more I see of men who have made a great success the more willing I am to be contented with a small one. This is a charming place, and the people are equally delightful. We lie high up in a dell; above us is a ridge beyond which stretch the uplands of Gloucestershire, and beneath is the Golden Valley, as it is called, through which the Severn winds amid forests, rich wheat fields, and pastures studded with noble elms. My host, the old ambassador,<sup>2</sup> is a tall, slender, aristocratic man, with an air of distinction even in his moustaches, a great hunting man, and hence an early riser. We breakfast at 8.30, and then he and I retire to a summer-house and smoke our pipes for an hour. From ten to one I work in my room, he in his. Then we lunch, Colonel Gordon and his wife (Indian people who are near neighbours) often dropping in, and I sometimes go to their house with her for an hour's music. From half-past two to five I am again at my writing-table. At five my host and I go for a long ride, or accompany a carriage full of the house party on horseback. We get home just in time to dress for dinner at eight. General Scott is the next person to be described. An old Waterloo man, *à la* ninety, unable to walk, and wheeled about in a chair. Grieves perpetually for his lost wife and children, and clings mournfully to his son-in-law, my host. A sad ruin. He was so handsome once that William IV. constantly invited him to dinner simply on account of his good looks. Number three is Mrs. Embrechts, the "Lady Dowager," as her letters are addressed, or "Kitty," as

<sup>1</sup> The only clause in this prayer relating to the dead runs thus :—"Finally let us praise God for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear, beseeching Him to give us grace to follow their good examples, that, this life ended, we may dwell with them in life everlasting."

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hodgson had been our Resident at the Court of Nepal.



Mr. Hodgson calls her, a young Dutch widow, daughter of the Commander-in-Chief in Indian waters; of fair looks and warm sensibilities, who spends her life in flattering and spoiling her male relatives, and gets duly snubbed by them in return. She is the kindest woman I have ever met, very musical, and a great hand at reading poetry. "Cousin Jim" is Number four. An Irish parson with white hair and a parish in Derry which gives him £1200 a year. An earnest, eloquent man, who gives us an extempore discourse after morning prayers, and, according to Mrs. Embrechts, ought to have been a bishop long ago.

On 2nd June Hunter joined his wife at Moir Place, Dunoon, and settled down to his Comparative Dictionary. The labour involved was untold, for philology was a new science in his case, and he had everything to learn. His struggles are artlessly told in a correspondence with Sir Erskine Perry, then a Member of the India Council.<sup>1</sup> This good man's sympathy with the peoples of India drew him towards one who had shown such profound knowledge of their characters and needs. On reading one of the copies of the Annals purchased by the India Office for distribution at home, he wrote Hunter a few lines of hearty approval, and added a tactful reference to the somewhat illogical grant of four months' extension of furlough without pay. This wholly unlooked-for tribute from a stranger touched Hunter's responsive nature to the quick.

TO SIR ERSKINE PERRY.

July 5, 1868.

Your generous appreciation of my book has gratified me exceedingly. It is the first official or demi-official recognition of a work which has cost me more than its readers will ever know in health, toil, and money. I am at present engaged, not upon the second volume, for which, indeed, much of the materials have yet to be gathered in Bengal, but upon the languages of the multitudinous and almost wholly unexplored aboriginal races of India, races with whom we are constantly quarrelling, because we understand neither their habits nor their necessities, and whom we have very often reason to admonish in the rough tones of musketry and artillery from ignorance of any other language in which to address

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Erskine Perry was the son of the well-known proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who suffered much for a fettered press. He was a barrister, became Chief Justice of Bombay, and, on his retirement in 1852, entered Parliament, where he championed the claims of natives of India to share in the administration. He died in 1882, aged seventy-six.



them. My work, now grown into a quarto, furnishing dictionaries of nearly 150 languages, will add, as it has been said, 125 new tongues to recognised speech. But its true value in my eyes will be the practical aid it will afford to frontier administrations, and the annual saving in blood and money it is capable of effecting. I began my researches very shortly after I reached India; my attention having been riveted by those melancholy and invariable sections in the Administration Reports which relate our dealings with frontier and other aboriginal tribes. . . . The most eminent Turanian scholars in Europe, both Germans and English, have for some time been assisting me. Mr. Brian Hodgson, formerly Resident in Nepal, has contributed his whole MSS. and linguistic libraries, the work of thirty years; and the Royal Asiatic Society, both officially through its secretary and privately by means of its most distinguished members, is contributing lists of words. I have arranged the work in English, French, German, Russian, and Latin, with keys and indices in each of these languages, so that it may form an imperial present from England to the scholars of the whole world. This book and the Annals have involved an outlay of between one and two thousand pounds, besides my unpaid labour and ruined health. This is exclusive of about £100 which the Bengal Government contributed for certain specified expenses. Had the State done the work by a Commission, it would have cost many thousands. Indeed, the Buchanan researches (1807-14), not more minute, and, I may say without pride, neither so reliable nor practically valuable for administrative purposes as my own, cost a lakh and a half.<sup>1</sup> Everything I possessed has been expended on the undertaking, but when it became known that for want of funds I should have to return to India without finishing the Dictionary, many scholars interfered, and the Royal Asiatic Society officially exerted itself to procure my continuing in this country, for the first time, I believe, since Sir Henry Rawlinson's case many years ago. When I learned that no pay would be given, I hesitated for some time, but eventually sold my horse, carriage, and whatever would fetch a price, broke up my establishment, and came to cheap lodgings in this remote part. I have at present six persons employed as assistants, some of them highly paid, but pecuniary help I have neither sought nor obtained from any one. Your kind suggestion about pay, therefore, renders your appreciation of my book even more gratifying. Personally, however, I should prefer going on without pay, and that Government should effect its generous intentions by presenting me with such a sum as it thought fit. For donations there are many precedents, but for a fixed rule to be relaxed in my particular case would place me in a very invidious and personally disagreeable position towards men of my service to whom a similar favour might be refused.

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to £15,000. As a matter of fact they cost more than £30,000.



Sir Erskine Perry earnestly recommended an application for a subsidy to the India Council, and promised his hearty co-operation.<sup>1</sup> This course, however, did not commend itself to Hunter's native independence of character. He replied:—

TO SIR ERSKINE PERRY.

July 8, 1868.

It would give me much greater pleasure to announce spontaneous assistance from Government in the preface to my Dictionary than such encouragement wrung from it, so to speak, by a formal request.<sup>2</sup>

Finding it impossible to induce a reconsideration of this decision, Perry took a step which did infinite credit to his heart. After rendering justice to his correspondent's sturdy self-reliance, he wrote:—

FROM SIR ERSKINE PERRY.

July 23, 1868.

In the meantime, if you will allow me, as belonging to the writer caste by birth, to show some little sympathy with your pursuits, I would ask you to draw on me for the sum of £200, to be refunded when you become a District-Collector.<sup>3</sup>

Such timely help, proffered by one who knew Hunter only from his first great work, was not to be despised. A loan of £145 was accepted with gratitude, and it relieved the struggling author from pecuniary difficulties which, above all others, tend to deaden energy and destroy creative power. It was the more welcome, for Hunter had again "given hostages to fortune." His second boy was born at Dunoon on the 1st July, and was named Brian, after Mr. Hodgson.

One of the many indirect results of the Annals was a determination on the part of the Bengal Government to do for the entire Province what Hunter had done for a single district. On the 28th May Mr. Henry L. Harrison, Under-

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 7th July 1868.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter's diary for that date put the matter more forcibly. "It is a national work, and, if paid for at all by Government, must be paid for, not at my suit, but for its own honour."

<sup>3</sup> The loan was repaid the following year.



Secretary in the Home Department,<sup>1</sup> wrote that it was in contemplation to compile a Historical Gazetteer of the Lower Provinces, and that he had mentioned Hunter to the Lieutenant-Governor as a possible director of that enterprise. The good news was confirmed by an official letter intimating his Honour's approval of the Annals, and calling for a detailed scheme for the compilation of a Bengal Gazetteer.<sup>2</sup> On 7th July Hunter submitted one which forms the basis of the greatest descriptive work undertaken since the Domesday Book. It concluded—

TO THE UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

July 7, 1868.

I beg to assure his Honour that if he sees his way to appoint me to the duty my whole endeavour will be to produce a work of official value. In my volume now before the Government I have not devoted a single paragraph to popularity seeking. Had I done so I should not be the heavy loser I am. But with an ascertained power for picturesque writing I have restricted myself to subjects from which administrative experience may be gained.

The Dunoon villa was too expensive for the family's exchequer, and, as soon as Mrs. Hunter was fit to travel, they migrated to a cottage at Auchenhui, near Lamlash, on the coast of Arran. Three salaried assistants were barely able to cope with the clerical labour entailed by the Dictionary. The author sought to obtain the co-operation of scholars versed in the different tongues by circulating among them specimen pages of his work with lists of English words for which he sought equivalents. Although he was careful to obtain introductions in every case from Muir, Max Müller, Hodgson, or Rost, he did not escape rebuffs. But most of the specialists cheerfully gave him the assistance he required, and some of them that which he valued more highly—their cordial sympathy. Mr. Malan wrote:—

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Henry Leland Harrison, Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation at a time when native factiousness and verbosity made the post quite impossible. He was over-prone to dialectics, but was a kindly, amiable man, and his tragic death from cholera, with that of his daughter, was sincerely regretted.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Bengal Government, No. 2668, dated 1st June 1868.



From the REV. CÆSAR MALAN.

*September 12, 1868.*

You must be a bolder man than I am to undertake a book for which you are necessarily so much dependent on others. I commend you much for your patience and perseverance, for you require a large stock of both.

The Basque vocabulary was supplied by Prince Lucien Bonaparte, cousin of the reigning Emperor of the French, who gave the same ardour to linguistic pursuits as his uncle, the great Napoleon, had shown in the arena of conquest. His letter forwarding it casts a curious light on the difficulties encountered by Basque students a generation back:—

From PRINCE LUCIEN BONAPARTE.

*September 2, 1868.*

I have taken advantage of the first free day left me to complete the list of Basque words which you have asked for. It has been founded only on Sarramendi's authority, and I should not wish to be held responsible for its correctness. I regret not being able to send you a fuller and more accurate list, for Sarramendi's work is wanting in very many words, though it is full of synonyms invented by him. I shall have great pleasure in offering you a copy of my Dictionary as soon as it appears; you will be better able to grasp the difference between the dialects, as well as the wealth of a tongue, which though it is non-Aryan, differs essentially from all the others which we call, for convenience' sake, "Turanian," meaning thereby nothing more than non-Semitic. The more one studies the so-called Turanian languages the more one is convinced that they differ as much as those styled "Aryan." To consider all the former as belonging to a simple category, as in the case of the Semitic or Aryan languages, is to see a resemblance between things which have nothing in common. For example—I speak with many apologies to the Aryanists—the Basque and Finnish dialects are infinitely more dissimilar than the Keltic languages and the Sanskrit. I do not attach much weight to the opinion of philologists not thoroughly versed in Sanskrit and the Asiatic tongues when they discuss those which they term Turanian but which are merely non-Aryan. Thank you for the very interesting specimen sheet which you have had the kindness to send me, and I earnestly hope that your Dictionary may soon appear, for we have had nothing which treats of the non-Aryan dialects on the scale which you have adopted. In six months I shall have more leisure than at present, and if I can then be



useful to you in anything which concerns Basque studies, I shall ask nothing better than to oblige you.<sup>1</sup>

Such a task was repellent to a spirit<sup>2</sup> imbued with romance and a love of the picturesque, but Hunter set his teeth firmly and carried it through at a vast expenditure of nerve-power. His diary shows pathetically enough the struggle between high resolve and an intense dislike for his self-imposed labour.

14th August.—Still the monotony of dry-as-dust dictionary-making. Found an hour for Macaulay's life (Milman). In the evening began an article for the *Pioneer* on the new science of Language.

15th August.—Finished *Pioneer* article. Have been getting up too early and sitting up too late; fairly broken with the terrible pain of Thursday's headache—thirty-three hours without food, sleep, or a moment's rest. My teeth feel as if they were dropping out, but I have to slave at my Dictionary and my articles all the same.

4th September.—I walk regularly and live very carefully, but the Dictionary keeps me just one degree above positive illness. Had I known the work it involved I would have thought twice before commencing it.

When at length the linguistic section was completed the choice of a publisher presented fresh difficulties. After many negotiations, Messrs. Trübner consented to launch the Dictionary on a guarantee of the actual cost, which Hunter, with his friend Hodgson's help, readily furnished.

Messrs. Murray & Gibb were again the printers, and the work of correcting the proofs began. But a Dissertation on our political relations with the autochthonous tribes of India was an essential part of the scheme, and here Hunter had much to animadvert upon which was not likely to be palatable to the authorities. On the other hand, her Majesty the Queen had

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 2nd September 1868. The writer was the third son of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, brother of the exile of St. Helena. On 6th January following, he wrote in grateful acknowledgment of a presentation copy, but declined to distribute the others sent him for the benefit of French linguists. He wrote: "I know the *savants* of my country better by their works than personally. Besides, from one in my position, any sort of preference brings with it a flood of odium. Each individual whom I might not select as a recipient of your book would, rightly or wrongly, consider himself slighted. Please remember that all *savants*, especially French ones, are very like pretty women, whatever their gravity or merit may be. Such, alas, is human nature!"



graciously permitted the Dictionary to be dedicated to her, on the recommendation of Sir Stafford Northcote. Thus Hunter found much difficulty in striking the keynote in his disquisition. The sands of his time in England were running short, and day after day he paced the little study waiting for inspiration, which was long in coming. One morning before dawn he awoke Mrs. Hunter with a joyous cry, "I've got it!" and straightway dictated to her sixteen quarto pages of the Introduction, which ranks amongst the most brilliant achievements of his pen. On the 22nd September, he bade farewell to the spot which had witnessed so many heart-searchings and returned to Lasswade in order to see the completed work through the press. Time was so short that the Dissertation was printed off without being read over by the author; and some of the proof-sheets were revised by the printers after inquiries among missionaries residing in Edinburgh as to the spelling of the proper names.

The "Comparative Dictionary of the Non-Aryan Languages of India and High Asia," which was published in the first week of November 1868, after its author's departure for India, is a handsome royal quarto volume of 230 pages. In spite of the railway speed at which it was compiled, there are very few typographical errors and no indications of undue despatch. Few printers or publishers of that day indeed could have produced a work containing many thousand barbarous words in six weeks.<sup>1</sup> The Dictionary proper gives the equivalents of 188 common English words in 134 languages and dialects of Asia, with the corresponding ones in Sanskrit, Arabic, Basque, Finnish, and Magyar or Hungarian. A page is appropriated to each word, and is headed with the synonyms in English, French, German, Russian, and Latin, while prefaces in these languages introduce the Dictionary to the scholars of the world. It must be admitted that the general result is far from bearing out Mr. Hodgson's theory, on which Hunter started, that all the aboriginal tribes of India have a kindred

<sup>1</sup> Messrs. Trübner wrote on 12th February 1869 in a strain which must have gratified Hunter: "While fully sharing the high opinion formed by the English press of the style in which the book is got up, we must decline your compliments, as the honour is exclusively due to your own unaided good taste."



origin. Rather does it mirror the confusion worse confounded let loose by the Tower of Babel. But the value to students and administrators of this first attempt to give a bird's eye view of so many obscure languages is not open to question. The Dictionary was always alluded to by Hunter half contemptuously as "a very bold enterprise," but it was well received by the press,<sup>1</sup> and gained for him the Doctorate-in-law of his University and Honorary Fellowships of the Ethnological Societies of London and the Hague. It would, indeed, be difficult to overrate the significance of the Political Dissertation, which is a generous plea most eloquently expressed for justice to the aboriginal races of India. Hitherto they had been known to us only by desperate revolts against the authority of British officials, who were profoundly ignorant of their speech and requirements. We forgot that the aborigines of the Carnatic were the Sepoys who enabled Clive to roll back the tide of French aggression and to sound the death-knell of the Mughal Empire at Plassy. We neglected the best raw material for soldiers that Asia can show, and filled our armies with Hindus and Mohammedans, banded together against us by fierce religious hatred and pride of caste. When we paid the penalty of this purblind folly in the Mutiny of 1857, it was the aboriginal Gurkas and Sappers that stood by us. At the present day, these self-same troops are the flower of our native army, but much remains to do ere we can be said to utilise the vast reserves of military strength presented by the aboriginal tribes. While the ever-rising tide of philological research has robbed the Dictionary of much of its worth in the scholar's eye, the section which treats of our relations with these interesting races is as true to-day as when it flowed from Hunter's magic pen. He who reprints it will deserve well of his country.

On 15th October Hunter bade a cordial farewell to the Murrays and went alone to his parents' house near Newcastle. As might have been expected, he was prostrated for some days in utter collapse. On the 21st neuralgia confined him to his

<sup>1</sup> *The Times* of 20th November 1868 gave a leading article to the Dictionary, and the *Saturday Review* styled it "a prodigious work, the conception of which was courageous, the execution laborious in the extreme, and the rapid completion marvellous."



room, and his mother, in deep distress, sat quite silent by his bedside the livelong day. On the morrow his unconquerable vitality asserted itself. He was able to meet Mrs. Hunter and the little ones at Carlisle and accompany them to Alderley Grange. It was a house of mourning, for his host's venerable father-in-law had passed away since the visit in May.<sup>1</sup> But Hodgson found solace in his affliction by entering with zest into his friend's designs. The diary of 26th October relates:—

Long talks every day with poor H. Urging him to edit his scattered works. Felt cut to the heart at his solitary and unheeded state. His researches, the foundation of a noble edifice, are now turned into a vast quarry out of which scholars surreptitiously build their own fame, just as mediæval barons erected palaces from the temples of ancient Rome.

The fate of the book which had cost him so dearly was very much on his mind. Fame, not profit, being the goal before him, he instructed Messrs. Trübner to bestow it liberally among philologists and learned societies. No fewer than two hundred copies of the Dictionary and one hundred of the Dissertation, separately bound, were thus distributed, and the actual cost of the publication swelled to £1600.<sup>2</sup> The diary for 28th October records:—

I intended to have had a week's rest, but find that the labour and anxiety of issuing a book into the world is even more exhausting than its composition. Terribly weary of the whole thing.

The concluding scenes of his fruitful stay in Europe are related in the diary:—

*31st October.*—Yesterday took a sorrowful farewell, and started from the station at 11.3. All came down to see us off. Spent 1½ hours at Bristol, and saw the city. At Bath the flags were flying half-mast high on the abbey tower, I suppose for Primate Longley, who lies dead. Reached Southampton at 6 p.m., and got everything on

<sup>1</sup> General Henry Alexander Scott, R.A., died 1st August 1868, in his ninetieth year. Hodgson announced his loss to Hunter on 10th August in a strain inspired by the dark shadows of a lonely old age: "I feel terribly the sundering of this last link, three having already been broken in the deaths of my wife, son, and daughter. They were my dearest friends on earth, each admirable and lovable in their own way. Of the old man just gone I never knew his equal in truthfulness, trustfulness, and self-denial except his daughter."

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Messrs. Trübner to the Government of Madras, dated 30th October 1868.



board. At noon to-day we embarked on the *Ceylon*. Busy writing letters, in spite of a blinding headache, until the tug left us at 3 P.M.

BAY OF BISCAY, 3rd November.—A complete copy of my poor book only reached me at Southampton an hour and a half before coming on board. I leave it to go forth to the world without friends, and probably with my best friends, the Aryan scholars, set against a work which exposes the one-sidedness of their present scheme of languages. Yet somehow I have no fear. If it is good it will live.



## CHAPTER X

### FRIENDS AND FOES

"THERE is nothing more reposeful to a busy man," writes Hunter in his "Life of the Earl of Mayo,"<sup>1</sup> "than the voyage across the Indian Ocean. Except during the monsoon months,<sup>2</sup> that sea seldom knows anything but perfect weather; nor could any better cure be suggested for the weariness of self and disgust with one's efforts to which men who habitually strain their brain are subject. If the remedy were more generally tried it would, I believe, affect the percentage of suicide among the professional classes."

The panacea succeeded in his own case. He landed in Calcutta on 9th December 1868 in perfect health, and with the brightest anticipations for the future. What manner of greeting did his colleagues mete out to the young author in whose ears the praises of Europe and America were ringing? It is told in a letter to his mother:—

*December 27, 1868.*

Since we landed I have had a busy time. We had quite a public welcome, and have been living so far with Dr. Chevers, the great promoter, and indeed the inventor, of Indian sanitation, and a kind friend of ours in a bygone day. Unfortunately all the members of the administration whom I had served with such success during the famine are either out of the country or out of power. Sir Cecil Beadon is keeping Christmas under his own vine and his own fig-tree in Gloucestershire. Mr. Steuart Bayley has been disposed of,<sup>3</sup> as has Mr. J. Geoghegan, the Under-Secretary. . . . People hinted to me that I might expect trouble precisely in proportion as I have been loyal and successful in my efforts for Sir Cecil Beadon at home, and that the natural jealousy which a close service like ours feels towards a member who has distin-

<sup>1</sup> The "Life of the Earl of Mayo," 2nd edition, 1876, vol. i. p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> The monsoon begins about the middle of June, and extends over July, August, September, and part of October.

<sup>3</sup> Now Sir Steuart C. Bayley, K.C.S.I. He was afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.



guished himself outside the regular line would be used as the instrument of my discomfiture. I answered that Government had twice sent me out its public thanks at home,<sup>1</sup> and that I could not believe that it would stoop to the meanness of thus flattering me when I had the power to injure and was beyond its jurisdiction, and turn round again when I was under its power again.

The head of the Government of Bengal, Mr. William Grey, is a man of twenty-eight years' service, and about forty-seven years of age.<sup>2</sup> He is rather above the middle height, his features well formed, forehead small, or rather compressed, manners reserved, or, to put it more forcibly, uneasy, but with an affectation of calmness. His life has been spent in Secretariats, so that he knows hardly anything of the people, or indeed the country, outside Calcutta. Of rural life and the necessities of the agricultural population he is profoundly ignorant, but in the routine of a great office, in the art of steering through political complications, and in all that appertains less to doing good work than to making work look well done, he is a past master. Seldom carried away by passion, and invariably soft and correct on paper, he sometimes loses his temper in conversation, and never forgives the man who has caused him to do so. . . . But such scenes rarely occur with Mr. Grey, who is a thoroughbred official with a sound, clear head, and a sharp eye for the man who can help him. My only apprehension is that he has not been long enough in office to make enemies or to require the help of friends. The public—I mean the English public here—with whom the Bengal Government sooner or later always comes into collision, so far only grumbles, and the news-

<sup>1</sup> Hunter had received the thanks of the Bengal Government for his report on the effects of the Orissa famine on education, and again for the Annals (Government letter, No. 2668, dated 1st June 1868).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Grey, K.C.S.I., was born in 1818, and was therefore in his fifty-first year at the date of this letter. He was the son of a bishop and grandson of Earl Grey, so that family influence obtained him an appointment in the Indian Civil Service and pushed him upwards with great rapidity. After a Secretariat career, he became Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in 1867, and retired in 1871 with the reputation of a just but unsympathetic ruler. It is only fair to his memory to state that differences on official matters never influenced his conduct towards Hunter, and that he was always ready with advice and help. In 1874 Sir William became Governor of Jamaica, an island smaller than most Bengal subdivisions. He had an adventure in this Lilliput which must have made him sigh for the absolutism of Belvedere. His Excellency was superintending the hanging of his pictures at Government House some days after arrival, and was much provoked by the crass stupidity of a negro carpenter. His natural warmth of temper showed itself in a light cut administered to the sable craftsman with a switch. The latter at once descended his ladder, deliberately gathered up his tools, and, looking the magistrate in the face, said, "You tink you's a mighty great buckra, but I run you in!" And sure enough, the following day came a summons for the Governor's attendance at the Kingston Police Court on a charge of assault! He was glad to effect a compromise through his aide-de-camp's agency on payment of £10. In Jamaica Sir William Grey laid the seeds of a malady which carried him off in 1878.



papers are either friendly or indifferent. Mr. Grey, therefore, does not require any help in this respect, and so he affects his favourite maxim that one should do nothing outside official routine. . . . However, the present Government has recently sent me its thanks, and stood pledged to carry out the scheme of the Rural Annals. Dr. Chevers pressed my hand very tenderly when I started, the day after my arrival, to see Mr. —, Chief Secretary to Government, and told Jessie that whatever happened I was not to be downcast. I was in rather good spirits, and confident of a friendly reception. Judge of my surprise when, instead of saying something nice about my Annals, Mr. — began a long tirade, and wound it up with an offer of a Calcutta appointment inferior in pay and position to the one I held two and a half years ago, and even below my standing in the service! If I did not accept this, he added, I might expect to be sent back to a subdivision, the post I had occupied in 1865. I pulled a very long face, and merely said that it would be my duty to accept any post for which the Government might think me fitted.

I need not reproduce the colloquy which followed. Suffice it to say that the Secretary lost his temper, while Hunter kept the guard on his tongue which he invariably maintained in a difficult position. The pair separated with a show of amity, and subsequent developments were entirely in the young official's favour. The letter proceeds:—

I did not in the least know what line he would take, so, in order to be ready for war, I went home and wrote out a précis of our conversation. But in the evening came a civil note from Mr. — saying nothing about the offer he had made me in the morning, and forwarding certain papers in which the Imperial Government of India had designated me as the man to draw up an Official Gazetteer of Bengal. He further asked me to put my views in writing as to my future employment, in order that he might submit them to the Lieutenant-Governor. . . . Meanwhile they put me into an office—that of Superintendent of Stamps and Stationery—which is worth £1800 a year; but as I am only officiating for another man I shall not draw more than £1400.

#### TO HIS MOTHER.

*January 19, 1869.*

Several mails have gone by without my finding time to finish this note. The Bengal Government have gone on wearing me out with its delays, and trying my temper. But I have steadily kept a cold and respectful attitude so that they can find no excuse for throwing me over. They have a quarrel with our common superior,



the Government of India, and are determined not to set the Gazetteer scheme going until the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, goes, so that the poor old man may not get the credit of it. He has been very kind to me, and the Supreme Government have recommended the thanks of the Secretary of State in Council, and a grant of £2000 for my "distinguished services." It has also proposed to take me over altogether from Bengal. This, however, the latter has objected to in the absence of a formal order, which the Viceroy does not like to give, as it would leave a quarrel behind him. The Bengal Government wishes for the honour of having the work done under its orders; and I am resolved neither to lose my temper with these people, nor to pretend any cordiality until they make up their minds to use me well. Please keep all this private, especially about the proposed grant of £2000. If it got wind at home, it might do me infinite harm with the critics; for the most fatal reputation is that of being a too fortunate man.

This substantial acknowledgment of Hunter's literary deserts was announced a few weeks later in a letter to the Viceroy:—

From the DUKE OF ARGYLL.

*March 4, 1869.*

The despatch of your lordship's predecessor in Council dated 3rd January 1869, recommending the presentation to Mr. W. W. Hunter, of the Bengal Civil Service, of a donation of £2000 has been considered by me in Council. I entirely concur with the Government of India in their sense of the distinguished merits of Mr. Hunter. I consider that by his two works the "Annals of Rural Bengal" and the "Dictionary of Non-Aryan Languages," he has supplied a most valuable contribution to ethnological and philological science, and has reflected honour on the service of which he is a member. It is with a feeling of cordial satisfaction that I accord my sanction to the proposal of the Government of India in favour of Mr. Hunter.

Other evidence of the high value of the Dictionary, which had cost him so heavily in purse and person, came to gladden his heart. The Government of India purchased 200 copies. that of Madras took fifty; Sir Donald M'Leod,<sup>1</sup> the scholarly Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, wrote officially through his

<sup>1</sup> Sir Donald Friell M'Leod was one of the little knot of resolute men who saved the Punjab in 1857. He became Lieutenant-Governor of that Province in 1865, and retired in 1870. He was a man of deep religious convictions and great ability, but was prone to over polish in letters and minutes. Hence he was dubbed by Sir Herbert Edwardes "Cunctator." He was killed in 1872 on the Metropolitan Railway.



secretary, in announcing that his Government had subscribed for eighty copies :—

*December 8, 1868.*

As the Dictionary deals for the first time in a really practical and enlightened manner with a subject the importance of which has for many years past been strongly impressed on his Honour's conviction . . . he attaches to the volume a special value, and will rejoice if any contribution of importance towards the elucidation of the momentous questions dealt with can be supplied from this Province.

The journalists who had offered so hearty a welcome to their colleague now urged him to renew his connection with the press. But on learning that the Bengal Government objected to his writing for the newspapers, he reluctantly declined their overtures. On Mr. J. O'B. Saunders' arrival in Calcutta, which closely followed Hunter's, he obtained the removal of the interdict. The influence invoked was that of Mr. Saunders' old friend and kinsman Mr. John Strachey,<sup>1</sup> who after gaining a reputation as the ablest District Officer in Bengal, sprang at a bound to high command under the Central Government. At this time he was Chief Commissioner of Oudh, and all powerful with the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, who was closing his great Indian career. Mr. Strachey already knew Hunter from his books, and the favourable impression was heightened by a close personal intercourse which dated from this period and lasted during the remainder of his stay in India. He espoused Hunter's views as to the necessity of concluding an alliance between Government and the local press, and obtained Lord Lawrence's sanction to an informal arrangement under which the young leader-writer became the channel of communication between the two forces. The position thus secured was strengthened by the accession to power of the Earl of Mayo, an event which proved the turning-point in Hunter's life and enabled him to convert his splendid dreams into realities.

Richard Southwell Bourke, sixth Earl of Mayo, had long been known to the public as an ardent foxhunter, and to his friends as a man of uncommon energy and still rarer kindliness of heart. His political reputation was confined to Irish affairs,

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I.



a topic even more unpopular with Englishmen of the last generation than it is at present. While Chief Secretary for Ireland he had so dealt with the Fenian Conspiracy of 1866 as to impress the Queen herself; and when the Premier, Mr. Disraeli, brought his name before her Majesty as a possible successor to Lord Lawrence, she gladly assented to the nomination. But the public announcement which followed in November 1868 raised a storm of indignation in the Liberal press.

The Viceroy-elect, keenly as he felt the torrent of abuse, was not deterred from attempting to fit himself for the great position by mastering the problems which it presented. His heart yearned for his beloved Ireland, on whose green hills he was destined never to gaze again; but he devoted the last few weeks of his private life to interviews with Anglo-Indians and to gaining a knowledge of the Empire from the files of the India Office. Thus he learnt the chaotic state of the Indian records; a subject which appealed with force to one who had devoted great labour to the reorganisation of the Irish archives. Hunter's name was mentioned to him as a would-be reformer; and his "Annals" were among the mass of literature which the future Viceroy eagerly assimilated. The burning question of governmental relations with the press was studied with equal care by Lord Mayo. On the eve of his departure he discussed it with the Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Northcote, and Hunter's remarkable letter on the establishment of an official organ was mooted at the interview. Thus on his arrival in India to assume the high office laid down by Lord Lawrence, he came prepared to utilise the brilliant gifts possessed by the man from whom he had learned so much. The scene presented by Calcutta on 12th January 1869 is described in the biography of Lord Mayo as Hunter alone could portray an historic pageant:—

The reception of a new Viceroy on the spacious flight of steps at Government House and the handing over charge of the Indian Empire which immediately follows, form an imposing spectacle. On this occasion it had a pathos of its own. At the top of the stairs stood the veteran Viceroy, wearing his splendid harness for the last day; his face blanched and his figure shrunken by forty years of Indian service; but his head erect and his eye still bright



with the fire that burst forth so gloriously in India's supreme hour of need. Around him stood the tried Councillors with whom he had gone through life, a silent, calm semi-circle, in suits of blue and gold, lit up by a few scarlet uniforms. At the bottom of the steps the new Governor-General jumped lightly out of his carriage amid the saluting of troops and glitter of arms; his large athletic form in the easiest of summer costumes, and a face red with health and sunshine. As he came up the tall flight of stairs with a springy step, Lord Lawrence, with a visible feebleness, made the customary three paces forward to the edge of the landing-place to receive him.

Hunter was among the group of officials who followed the illustrious pair to the Chamber, where—

Lord Lawrence and his Council took their usual seats at the table, the Chief Secretaries stood round, a crowd of officers filled the room, and the silent faces of the Englishmen who had won and kept India in times past looked down from the walls. The clerk read out the oaths in a clear voice, and Lord Mayo assented. At the same moment the Viceroy's band broke out with "God save the Queen" in the garden below, a great shout came in from the people outside, the fort thundered out its royal salute, and the 196 millions of British India had passed under a new ruler. In the evening, at a State dinner given by Lawrence, Lord Mayo appeared in his Viceregal uniform, the picture of radiant health. His winning courtesy charmed more than one official, who had come with the idea, derived from the attacks in the English partisan newspapers, that he would be unfavourably impressed by the new Governor-General. As Lord Mayo moved about in his genial strength people said that at any rate Mr. Disraeli had sent out a man who could stand hard work, and it would be a good thing to set a precedent of an English statesman going through the Indian Vicerealty without dying of it. At least this formed the talk of one little group as they loitered homewards after dinner across the great Calcutta plain; Government House, still ablaze at all its windows behind, the fort and forest of tall masts on the right, and on the left the long line of mansions stretching stately and white in the starlight till they lost themselves among the foliage, topped by the cathedral spire at the far end of the expanse.<sup>1</sup>

The countenance shown Hunter by the new Viceroy produced a radical change in his relations with the Bengal Government. Under pressure from above, the question of compiling a provincial Gazetteer was taken up in earnest, and he saw a ruling ambition of his life within measurable distance

<sup>1</sup> The "Life of the Earl of Mayo," i. 177.



of realisation. The history of previous attempts to produce Gazetteers of India is instructive, if only because it shows the enormous waste of time and energy resulting from the absence of a directing mind. The rulers of India had not been unmindful of the duty of placing information as to its history and resources within reach of the officials called on to administer it. As far back as 1807, Dr. Francis Buchanan was requested by the Governor-General to compile a statistical account of Bengal. He was the best man available for the arduous task; the instructions given him were well conceived, the remuneration was more than adequate, and his operations were not cramped by any hard and fast rules limiting the period of his labours. Yet the net result was that, after seven years of exhaustive inquiries, not a single page was available for publication, and after thirty years the statistics of nine districts only could be disinterred from the mass of material which Buchanan had left behind. His failure was due to no want of conscientiousness on his part. It was produced by three radical defects in his scheme of work. No attempt was made to estimate the space which could reasonably be allowed to each district, the number of volumes which a single author could write or the public assimilate. The data already in existence were not utilised, nor was the help of existing departments of Government asked for. Dr. Buchanan had to learn every district for himself. And lastly, it was not thought necessary to publish each completed part of his survey as it was obtained. Thus it was not till 1838 that three volumes descriptive of the fifty Bengal districts saw the light. Inadequate as were the results of an expenditure which amounted to £30,000, they attracted a large share of public notice, and induced the directors of the East India Company to attempt the completion of Dr. Buchanan's work. In 1854 Mr. Thornton prepared an alphabetical Gazetteer of India under their authority, and two years later an interleaved copy of his book was sent to the local governments, with instructions to collect materials for an enlarged edition. But the Mutiny intervened to transform the map of India, and give its statesmen something else to think of than statistical survey. And Thornton's Gazetteer was utterly unfitted to serve as a basis



for a Doomsday Book of an Empire extending over 1,500,000 square miles, with a population of 240,000,000. Its author had never set foot in India, and was dependent on others for the local colouring, the special knowledge of which alone could make such an undertaking live. He wrote, too, before any of the great questions of our time had taken root on Indian soil. The capitalist, eager to exploit the resources of a country which was still an abstraction to home-staying Britons, the intending investor in governmental or railway loans might search its pages in vain for any information which would enable him to shape his action. On the mineral wealth, the climatic conditions and the ethnological distribution of the country Thornton was judiciously silent. Data existed in abundance on each of these points, the fruits of the geological, revenue, and archæological surveys which had been conducted in the true scientific spirit. But the plan of all previous Gazetteers excluded technical information, and no one had thought of focusing the lights thrown by previous research to form an authoritative description of the Empire and its resources. The persistence of the home authorities were not without useful results. It led Sir Richard Temple, while Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, to render an account of his stewardship, which showed rare literary power and a profound insight into the country and its people. It produced, too, a series of district Gazetteers, compiled under his auspices, which proved that the task of portraying the myriad aspects of India was not beyond human skill. Encouraged by this partial success, the Secretary of State in 1867 suggested that similar work should be attempted in other provinces, and the various administrations were called on "to take steps for the compilation of a Gazetteer, in accordance with the wishes of her Majesty's Government."<sup>1</sup> The Bengal Government at once applied for leave to appoint a special officer to superintend these operations, and, as was seen in the previous chapter, Hunter's name was suggested as that of a possible compiler. The success of his *Annals*, and the steady support of Lord Mayo, rendered it clear to the Bengal authorities that no other choice could be

<sup>1</sup> Despatch to the Viceroy, No. 140, dated 23rd August 1867, and Orders thereon of the Government of India, dated 19th October.



made, and at the request of the Lieutenant-Governor, he drafted proposals, which covered the entire scope of the projected work.<sup>1</sup> The Gazetteer of Bengal was to be a single octavo volume of a thousand pages, affording a bird's-eye view of the Province in its historical, geographical, and statistical aspects. Hunter was to be placed in charge of the compilation on a salary of £1200 a year, with a special clerical establishment, and an allowance for local research and literary help. On the completion of the Gazetteer of Bengal, which was to come in two years' time, it was suggested that a bonus proportionate to its value should be awarded to the author.

The Indian Government accepted the bulk of these propositions, but preferred a consolidated salary of £1800 to the rather vague device of a bonus. The Asiatic Society of Bengal, owing to Hunter's influence with its secretary, Mr. H. Blochmann, had urged the necessity of a systematic plan of execution for all the provincial Gazetteers, and of a uniform method of spelling proper names. The Viceroy in Council directed that Hunter should ascertain what had been done by every local authority, should forward a scheme for utilising the materials already collected, and formulate the principles on which all the Gazetteers were to be compiled.<sup>2</sup> This decision filled Hunter with joy. He found himself, for the first time in his life, free from vexatious interference, and with abundant scope for his marvellous organising power and his love of sustained labour. Nor was he less delighted with the prospect of associating his name with a scientific method of rendering Indian words into the English language. The "Hunterian" spelling, which evolved luminous order out of chaos, took its birth in July 1869. His feelings found expression in a letter to Major Owen Tudor Burne,<sup>3</sup> Military Secretary to Lord Mayo, with whom he had struck up a friendship destined to grow closer till it was severed by death.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Government of Bengal to that of India, No. 455, dated 2nd February 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Government of India, No. 3056, dated 3rd July 1869. On 28th July Hunter was gazetted as "on deputation in the Home Department and compiler of the Bengal Gazetteer."

<sup>3</sup> Now General Sir Owen Burne, G.C.I.E.



TO MAJOR OWEN BURNE.

July 20, 1869.

I am exceedingly grateful for the arrangements which his Excellency has made with regard to the Gazetteer; and I will do my best to make the results justify his kindness. . . . I believe that the work, if properly interpreted, and performed with fidelity and insight, is capable of being rendered one of the most conspicuous memorials of the Queen's government in India. One ruler after another has tried it and failed, and not less than £75,000 has been spent during the past century without producing a complete or authoritative work. Yet I am convinced that it can be done from beginning to end within five years, and at not much more expense to Government than the pay of a district judge. You can understand, therefore, how grateful I am to his Excellency for the opportunity he has given me of maturing my plans.

The Comparative Dictionary had made Hunter a recognised authority on the languages of the belt of savage races inhabiting the highlands which separate the Empire from the rest of Asia. He was asked by the Bengal Government to advise as to the written character which should be adopted in intercourse with the hill-tribes on the eastern frontier. His reply is, I think, conclusive on a subject which had long exercised men belonging to the large class who find an outlet for the redundant energies of our race in pressing Utopian schemes on Government and the public. Among these movements is one which aims at superseding the written character of the various Indian vernaculars by English, or as they are commonly styled, "Roman" letters.

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

April 21, 1869.

The question arises from the desire of Government to educate and civilise the peoples on its eastern frontiers. The civilisation which it is prepared to give them is not to be of the self-developed sort, but it is to be introduced from without. From what side will this civilisation arise, and what alphabet and language are best suited to convey the new thoughts, influence, and modes of life which it will bring in its train? The tribes lie between Bengal and Burma, and are subject to the British Government. The papers accordingly disclose three distinct views, the first of which inclines to the adoption of the English or Roman character, the second to the Burmese, and the third to the Bengali as a primary vehicle of education, where the people do not possess an alphabet of their own. The objections to the Roman character are twofold.



First, it will not enable the tribes to hold communication with the comparatively civilised people on either side of them—the people from whom their new habits and ideas will necessarily be derived. The anticipation that these savages will take their civilisation with their letters from a few English administrators is neither supported by experience nor within the ordinary probabilities of history. The distance, political and social, is far too great for a single leap, and the administrators who have exercised the most permanent influence on hill races have been most willing to divest themselves of their English habits and views of life, and to meet the people half-way. The civilisation of the hill tribes of Chittagong must come from the slightly more advanced peoples who are their natural neighbours, and who constantly press upon them from without. To teach them the Roman character would simply involve their learning two alphabets instead of one. The second objection to the Roman character for such tribes is that, even if it were not ill suited to attain the political results sought for, it has serious educational drawbacks. People argue as if the Roman alphabet of the linguists was identical with our ABC, and would, therefore, save all trouble in learning the English character to those who should eventually prosecute their studies in our tongue. This is not the case. The Roman alphabet of the linguists is simply a rude but convenient device for printing foreign languages in our English type, and differs from our own both as to the number of its letters and the nature of its sounds. Thus the English alphabet has but twenty-six characters; the Roman has nearer forty, while not a single vowel has the same sound as the corresponding vowel of our own. It is but a poor makeshift to express an Indian language—a makeshift which the cheapness and abundance of vernacular types in this country has now rendered unnecessary. It would tend to complicate rather than to simplify the subsequent pronunciation and study of English.

The writer went on to demonstrate that the adoption of the Burmese characters was open to objection from a geographical and political point of view. Nature had imposed a barrier of trackless mountain between our territories and those of Upper Burma, which was then under the sway of a native king. And, even if routes of communication existed to the east of the hill tracts, could the inert religion, the non-progressive institutions of Upper Burma be compared with the leaven which was fermenting and bursting into new forms of national life in Bengal? The inference was that the characters in constant use in that Province was the fittest channel for civilising influences on our Eastern borders. It



was accepted by the Government, which, in Hunter's words, "adopted the Bengali alphabet in spite of the local authorities, whose arguments were fitter for a nursery than for any sphere of life that I know of."

One of the penalties attaching to success is the bitter hostility which it evokes in those who are less able or fortunate. Everything in life has its compensations, and the laggards in the race for fame may find comfort in reflecting that if they have achieved less they have probably suffered less than those whose lot they are inclined to envy.<sup>1</sup> We have seen how jealousy dogged Hunter's footsteps at the moment of his earliest triumphs. It was ever present to lessen the satisfaction caused by the steady growth of his influence with the new Viceroy.

In the noble political Dissertation which prefaced his Comparative Dictionary he had championed the aboriginal races of India against the slanderers whose utterances, founded on imperfect knowledge, tended to poison public opinion and warp the generous impulses of the British people. He instanced an official report on the Bhutias of the northern frontier of Bengal, which branded them as quarrelsome, drunken, and immoral. In their defence he quoted the opinion of Mr. Brian Hodgson, who believed them to be "not noxious but helpless, not vicious but aimless, both morally and intellectually, so that one cannot without distress behold their careless, unconscious inaptitude."

Let the reader (Hunter exclaimed) contrast this touching portraiture of the wildest of the unreclaimed tribes with the above uncritical denunciation of the whole Bhutia stock, and from its successful calumnies on a people who have formed an object of anxious scrutiny during many years let him judge of the bold flights of malignancy that are safely ventured on in delineation of less known races.

This plain speaking caused deep offence to those who were responsible for the inglorious Bhutia campaign of 1863-64, and the Bengal Government was induced to tender an official

<sup>1</sup> Sir Antony MacDonnell, G.C.S.I., while acting as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at an unusually early age, said, "Depend upon it, the happy man is the obscure man."



protest against the young writer's view of its relations with the hillmen. The subject was discussed by the Viceroy's Executive Council, and the result was a signal vindication of the cause of truth and justice. The Hon. Mr. John Strachey thought Hunter's opinion in the main correct, and expressed with due respect for his superiors. Sir Henry Maine considered the Bengal Government's communication better suited to a review than the proceedings of the Government of India. His Minute concluded significantly :—

We must remember that the personal staff of the Bengal Office has a grudge against Mr. Hunter. Rightly or wrongly some of them think that the author of the "Annals of Rural Bengal" and the "Comparative Dictionary" has been overpraised. I cannot help surmising that in this letter we have further evidence of the feeling in question.

The Viceroy was of the same mind. He wrote :—

By making Mr. Hunter's Dictionary a subject of official reference, the Government of Bengal makes itself a party in a controversy which, as a Government, I do not think it can carry on with proper regard for its own dignity or advantage to the public service.<sup>1</sup>

In those days Hunter was still sensitive and prone to resent injustice. His annoyance at the treatment meted out to him on his return to India found expression in a letter to Mr. John Strachey :—

May 27, 1869.

The position I hold is liable to painful and even dishonouring misconception, one in which any man would be fiercely assailed, and one in which the incumbent requires a perfect belief in himself and an indisputable *locus standi*. I have as yet obtained none whatever, hence these paltry attacks. I walk honestly, and fear no man. For six years I have lived in constant intercourse with the journalists of India. My character is known to them better, perhaps, than I know it myself, and I believe I state the truth when I say that not one of them would allow an attack on me in editorial columns. This, too, in spite of their identifying me with a paper which many of them attack most bitterly. I have broken silence because I ask myself, if malice has led my assailants thus to rush into falsehoods in print, what must be the lies they tell about me in a small cliquish society like that of Simla, where I

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Government of India in the Foreign Department of June and July 1869. Mr. Strachey became member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in March.



am almost unknown? . . . Within five months all the leading newspapers on this side of India have been brought into and have been kept in accord with Government, and the same course has been taken with several journals at home. This is no single man's work. Lord Mayo is a master most easy to serve as a leader-writer, and I am confident that his action and your views have but to be fairly stated to secure the public on your side. To the best of my ability I have done this, using only my private influence backed by such powers of statement as I possess.

His mental distress was displayed in a reply to the congratulations of an old Glasgow class-fellow on his receipt *honoris causâ* of the LL.D. degree of that University:—

TO MR. W. H. DUFF.

May 25, 1869.

Your letter affected me in a peculiar manner. It is the fate of every man who does anything in a small community to be the object of excessive praise or reprobation. I can only say that I try to do the work that has been put into my heart to do, unreluctant by the former and willing, for the sake of the cause, to bear the latter in silence. The good opinion of good men will always be grateful to me, and I hope by my life to disprove the numerous and most cruel falsehoods of my detractors. I did not know that our Alma Mater had conferred a degree upon me, although I had heard of some such intention. It will give me great pleasure, but not a greater one than I got from your letter, which is a regular piece of Scottish kindness, and comes to me at a moment when my only three enemies in the world are attempting to do me a cruel wrong.

“What is difficult?” asked the Greek sage Cheiton. “To employ leisure usefully, to keep silence on secrets, and to bear unjust treatment with patience.” Hunter was pursued through life by the ignoble herd who regard merit as a reflection on their own impotence. But as years went on he steeled his heart against calumny. While myself smarting under wrong, I laid my grievances before him, assured of the eager sympathy which he always lavished on his friends. His reply was a quotation from a magazine which I have never been able to trace:—

For the discomforts which a man feels from friction with others he generally has himself to thank. He should have disciplined his delicacy of spirit, even as he has regulated in intellectual exercises. A sensitive person must, in short, habituate himself to explain away the slights, or what he conceives to be slights, that



he is sure to receive in contact with the world. And really, the intellect is so pliable and sophisticated that he will, with practice, find this no such hard task. Thus eventually it will come to pass that calumny, vexatious enough to the hardened, will glance from his seasoned skin without causing him the ghost of a pang.

Nor was his attitude under unmerited reproach a passive one. He made it a rule to requite good with evil. Indeed, many of his friends were inclined to think that he carried Christian charity a little too far, and that his foes were encouraged in their manœuvres by the certainty that he would never retaliate.

Like most of the clouds that beset our horizon, this one rolled away and left Hunter as self-reliant as ever. "He who goes through life without a friend or an enemy," says Lavater, "is a very poor creature." The one implies the other, and Hunter's warm heart found responsive echoes from men whose opinions were worth having. Mr. C. A. Elliott, of the Civil Service,<sup>1</sup> then Secretary to the Government of the North-West Provinces, stood forth as a champion in the *Pioneer*, and rebuked the malice aroused by Hunter's brilliant career. Sir H. S. Maine,<sup>2</sup> who was at the close of seven years of enduring work as a lawgiver, honoured him with his close friendship. Among the many letters of this great man belonging to 1869 I single out the following, which is characteristic of the rest:—

From Sir HENRY MAINE.

June 23, 1869.

The accompanying papers will probably explain themselves. They will appear in the *Gazette of India* next published, and you will easily divine why they are sent to you, their discussion in the press being inevitable. I am very anxious that they should be dealt with worthily, if not for the sake of the exponent for that of the subject, which surely is most curious and interesting. The growth of legislation, in spite of the wish of every one (myself included) to check it, is a phenomenon of the utmost importance. I myself believe that, not only is an increase of legislation inevitable in India, but that facility of legislation is the last relic of real power left to this Government. If it be distasteful to you to handle the subject, from your having formed an adverse opinion or

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Charles Alfred Elliott, K.C.S.I., chairman of the London School Board.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry Sumner Maine, author of "Ancient Law" (1861), was India's greatest jurist, and it may be said with truth that he touched nothing without adorning it. He died in 1888, aged sixty-six.



from any other cause, pray don't think of it. I make the suggestion to you because I think there are few people competent to write on the matter, least of all the mere lawyer. I have to thank you for a very able paper on Indian Finance.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, F.R.S., superintendent of the Royal Gardens at Kew, had sought Hunter's acquaintance after the publication of the Dictionary, and maintained a most friendly correspondence with him. He wrote regarding their common friend, Mr. Brian Hodgson :—

From SIR JOSEPH D. HOOKER.

*March 13, 1869.*

I certainly was and am pleased with your acknowledgment of Hodgson's labours, and told him I thought they were ample. I was surprised to find him inclined to differ, the fact being that he looked for some acknowledgment of his services as an administrator, and having, as he said, taken up the study of native character with the same views and ends as yourself. Of course I am no judge of such a matter as this. As a scientific man I regarded his philological labours as of far higher merit, interest and promise than his political career, whatever that might have been. He has, no doubt, told you of his approaching marriage to a young lady of twenty-six. He is in great excitement, but hardly, I think, in high spirits about it. His life is not a happy one, and I fervently hope and believe that this step will turn out to his comfort.

It is pleasant to find Sir Joseph's augury confirmed by events. Mr. Hodgson, in reply to joint congratulations from the Hunters on his marriage, wrote :—

*June 28, 1869.*

The good wishes of yourself and your dear wife are, thank God, already in such a course of realisation as promises well for the future. It was a bold step for one of my age to take, but it was taken deliberately on both sides, and in my wife's attachment I have the best foundation for the bright dreams in which I am fain to indulge.

I am the most domestic of creatures, and cannot live without a loving and sensible companion. I verily believe that one has been found by me, the disparity in our ages notwithstanding.<sup>2</sup>

Hunter's large heart found room for all sorts and conditions of men. Among his Indian friends were Dr. Sambhu Chandra

<sup>1</sup> A pamphlet on "The Uncertainties of Indian Finance," published 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter's "Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson," 1896, p. 328, records that Mrs. Hodgson was "devoted to her husband with the perfect affection which noble natures inspire and feel."



Mukharji, a Bengali journalist and administrator, who afterwards became the editor of the most influential of Calcutta weeklies, *Reis and Rayjet*. He wrote on 29th July, after a visit to the North-Western Provinces :—

I profited little by my sojourn up country in point of health. The heat was so awful that I was glad to escape with life. There were scores who were not so fortunate. The last two nights have been sultry enough in Calcutta, and robbed me of my sleep. You, of course, in Chowringhee did not perceive it; but matters are different in the bakeries, which we natives style sleeping apartments, and which are constructed to guard our women from a stranger's gaze, and ourselves from the advent of fresh air or breeze.<sup>1</sup>

In the great task assigned to him by Lord Mayo—that of supervising the preparation of Gazetteers by every local government—Hunter had the fullest scope for his tact and knowledge of mankind. In August he set out on a tour of inspection in Northern and Western India, during which he learnt what each authority was doing, and moulded their efforts by the sheer force of his personality. The letters to his wife during the latter half of 1869 are full of the impressions left by the new scenes with which he came in contact :—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

August 28, 1869.

I am in capital health, and missed my headaches both this week and last. If I had you and the darling boys with me I should be perfectly contented, for I feel that I am succeeding everywhere. My last happy thought was that, if the Gazetteer is properly handled, it will be a record of progress and administrative success that no other country can show. Did I tell you my plan for eliciting an accord about the spelling of native proper names, especially those of places, among the heads of departments? It seemed impossible to induce each to give up his own particular fad, but I think I have got them all into my net at last. It is ticklish work holding such big fish, however, and I have to play them very gently and patiently. Won't it be an achievement to impress one's individuality for ever upon the country, and to leave behind a monument of skilful management in a stereotyped name for every person and place throughout the length and breadth of India?

<sup>1</sup> For further details of this most remarkable man of letters the reader is referred to my memoir of him, "An Indian Journalist," Calcutta: Thacker and Spink, 1895.



At Lucknow he was the guest of Mr. (now Sir Henry) Davies, K.C.S.I., Chief Commissioner of Oudh; and at Naini Tal, the hill capital of the North-West, he had a glimpse of the family life of Sir William Muir, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*September 12, 1869.*

They are really good and hospitable people. I do think that refined, highly educated Scotch people have a deeper sense of religion than Englishmen of the same rank. It is beautiful to see so large a family, from Sir William, aged fifty, down through a widowed daughter of twenty-eight, a bright young girl of twenty, and a Cornet but a little older, to a whole bevy of children and grandchildren, the youngest of whom is just Broughton's age. All are in perfect health, and with genuine English "go" in them. The daughters of seven and nine are just like school-girls at home, and drum away at their scales in the same maddening manner. Lady Muir is very nice. Sir William married at twenty, and they have gone through all the gradations of our service from assistant up to Lord-Sahib. The longest time she was ever away from her husband was two and a half months. I thought, darling, that you were just such another wife. . . . I have managed to settle about the Gazetteer for the provinces. At my last interview (on Friday) the difference of opinion between Sir William and the other Lieutenant-Governors was so marked that I began to despair. I, therefore, resolved to study his character carefully for a few days before opening the siege again. This morning, I am thankful to say, I have succeeded.

*October 1st.*

Last evening we rode up to the top of Chini, a hill which towers above Naini Tal's blue lake. When we got there the peaks were enveloped by the mists, so we lit a fire under great difficulties, and each made coffee among the clouds. My memo. on the Board of Revenue's records in these provinces is going to be a much bigger affair than I thought, and will be useful to the officials. I now begin to see the scope of the work before me. It will be a great national enterprise, and, in spite of financial deficits, I think that it will be in the interest of Government to persevere. In fact it is because we have to borrow money that my work is now especially necessary, and the worse our financial position, the more important it is to show where the money has gone. We have been converting a miserable Asiatic despotism into a first-class administration on the European model, and in the process we have been compelled to invest immense sums in the "plant" of a civilised government—roads, railways, canals, jails, barracks, and officers. This outlay is not really expenditure, but capital



indirectly productive, and this my work will prove. There is a new field springing up under our feet. The necessity of borrowing large sums, perhaps eighty millions, in the next twenty-five years will completely alter the relations between the Indian Government and the people. It must court the public and win its confidence; and the creeping things, like —, and the rest, who have battened in Secretariats and other dark holes, where public opinion is not allowed to enter, will find that their time has gone by. We are getting a new stamp of men, and Lord Mayo and Mr. Strachey are the first of them. The other night, after a dinner at Government House, Simla, the Viceroy took me into a corner and talked to me for three quarters of an hour. His conversation was exactly that of an intelligent and highly educated merchant, who had a large landed estate to manage in addition to his trading concerns. He discoursed of corn, coals, factories and, above all, the people of the land, and his great scheme for securing them against famine.

*October 2nd.*

Last night I reached Lahore, and dined with Mr. Lepel Griffin,<sup>1</sup> who is just recovering from a dangerous illness. Fever and dysentery, my old enemies, are his, but he has no good wife to tend and save him as I had. . . . I think I shall be the last man to travel from Ambala to Ludhiana in an express dak. I started on 30th September, the day before the new railway opened. It was sad to think that another old institution had come to an end, and that all the energy and inventiveness which had been bestowed on the great military highway were no longer to be of use to the Empire. The halting-places are doomed to decay, like the inns on the coaching roads in England. All through the night, as I was whirled along in my post-carriage, I passed group after group of bearded men cowering round their camp-fires, and wondering what sort of a new world was to be ushered in on the morrow. The railway was in every one's mouth, and the idea seemed to keep them awake. It was a curious sight—the congregations of bullock carts with huge canvas tops, drawn up in a circle, the oxen keeping up a constant tinkling with their bells as they placidly munched their fodder, while some story-teller held forth to the tall Sikhs, whose beards and well-cut features stood outlined in the fire-light. In a few days all this will be a thing of the past. Will the world be the happier?

*October 10th.*

It is cool enough here in Poona to allow one to ride in the middle of the day without absolute danger, though in Bombay the heat was intolerable. The Western capital is a city which shows a good deal of bustling life, but it wants the stately solidity of Calcutta. The natives there really seem to have wakened up, and

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Lepel Griffin, K.C.S.I.



they have some idea of the value of time. They mix with Europeans on terms of equality, and certain Parsis employ English coachmen. The officials do not compare well with those of the other Presidencies, and the Gazetteer arrangements are utterly contemptible. I am wild about it, but manage, by a great effort, to hold my tongue.

About the middle of October he returned to Calcutta, and paid the usual penalty for over-exertion in an attack of fever and dysentery which, after completely prostrating him, at length yielded to his wife's nursing and the zeal of his medical attendants. His convalescence was marked by a thank-offering of Rs.1000, given to a fund administered by Dr. Joseph Ewart for the relief of patients discharged as cured from the Medical College Hospital.<sup>1</sup>

Thus closed 1869, a year as memorable in Hunter's career as that which witnessed his first literary success. He had baffled the malice of those who had sought to obstruct his upward path; he was strong in the trust of his noble-hearted chief, and conscious of the power to accomplish the greatest of his life's achievements.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Dr. Joseph Ewart, dated 8th December 1869.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE FIRST BEREAVEMENT

THE machinery for producing the provincial Gazetteers was now in full swing. As described in a report addressed to the Supreme Government,<sup>1</sup> it commands our admiration by the grasp which it displays of a highly complex subject, and the practical common sense exhibited in dealing with a crowd of heterogeneous agencies. The administrative unit throughout British India is the District Magistrate-Collector, who is responsible for the executive and revenue work of an area larger than an average English county. He is a drudge who serves many masters, reporting the statistics of his charge to the various heads of departments at the Presidency capital. To them Hunter had recourse for data relating to the branches under their control. The District Officer was asked only for facts and figures which were otherwise unattainable, and his task was lightened by the issue of a set of questions relating to the revenue, the distribution of land, the history and geography of his little kingdom.

No Gazetteer could have much practical value unless it reproduced Indian proper names with uniformity and precision. The preliminary report, therefore, laid down the principles of the system afterwards known as the "Hunterian." Three divergent methods of rendering Eastern names had been in use, and each had its champions, who proclaimed their views with a vigour which it is now difficult to comprehend. The oldest was evolved by eighteenth-century adventurers, who wrote the names of Indian persons and places as they would strike the uneducated British ear. Thus Siraj-ud-daula was often travestied as "Sir Roger Dowler," and the Nilgiris became the

<sup>1</sup> "A Plan for an Imperial Gazetteer of India," folio, dated 29th November 1869.



"Nelly Gray Mountains." Sir William Jones' instincts as a philologist were outraged by such monstrosities of diction; and in 1790 he framed a system of transliteration, which was adopted by the learned societies of Europe and the East. By a free use of accents, italics, and diacritical marks he endeavoured to make the English ABC do duty for the more copious alphabets of the East. The pedantry of the Jonesian system was most irritating to the unscientific eye, and printers rebelled against the expense and delay involved in its multiplicity of strange symbols. In 1820 a well-known teacher of Hindustani named Gilchrist published a scheme based on phonetic methods. "A" short became "U," and long vowels were reduplicated. Words thus spelt had a most uncouth appearance, and they were invariably mispronounced by readers unacquainted with Eastern languages. The Battle of the Spellings raged for half a century with fury, and the outcome was a chaos which became more mischievous as India was drawn closer to her Suzerain.

Hunter proceeded on eclectic methods, and hit upon a happy compromise between the claims of science and practical utility. Sir William Jones' system had received the imprimatur of science. It was, therefore, adopted as a basis for the new spelling, but was purged of the complexity and pedantry which unfitted it for the uses of everyday life. No attempt was made to earmark consonants having similar sounds. Long vowels and diphthongs were distinguished by acute accents, but these were used as sparingly as possible. A concession was made to the popular prejudice by stereotyping the spelling of all proper names which had obtained historical fixity.<sup>1</sup> Such are, briefly, the canons of the Hunterian spelling. Its deviser encountered enormous difficulties ere he succeeded in inducing the authorities to sanction its universal adoption. In the end his pertinacity won the day, and it may be truly said that had he done nothing more for India than infuse common sense into

<sup>1</sup> "Plan for an Imperial Gazetteer," secs. 76-81; also a "Note on the Spelling of Proper Names," dated July 1873. Hunter's struggles against the *vis inertiae* of the Supreme Government and the determined opposition of that of the North-Western Provinces continued for four years. In a letter to Sir Henry Thuillier, Surveyor-General of India, dated 23rd October 1873, he wrote: "This spelling question is the bane of my life."



the transliteration of proper names, his own would deserve to be long remembered.

In India, as elsewhere, red tape is a fetish, and the mills of the gods grind slowly. Some months elapsed between the issue of circulars calling for information and the receipt of replies. Hunter was not the man to waste a single day; and this breathing-space was devoted to a task which he regarded as a continuation of the "*Annals of Rural Bengal*." He did for an outlying portion of that province what he intended to accomplish for the whole of India—thus presenting an object-lesson to his fellow-workers on the *Gazetteer* and a sample of the vaster work to the British public. This tract was Orissa, in area and population only little inferior to the whole of Scotland, and cut off from the satrapy on which it depends by shoals and swamps which were main factors in the famine of 1866. The outcome of the inquiries upon which he entered in 1870 was seen two years later in "*Orissa*,"<sup>1</sup> a work which describes this unknown land as one where—

Nature, long grown cold and inert in Europe, here toils as wildly at her primeval labour as if the work of creation still lay before her. She discloses her ancient secrets of land-making and admits us as spectators to the miracle of the Third Day. . . . Within the single province of Orissa she has brought together, as in a great museum, specimens of all her handicrafts, from the half-formed amphibious region around the river mouths to the chaos of primitive rock which walls out the seaboard from the inner table-land.

Upon the delta and among the mountains which rise behind it we come upon endless strata of races, dynasties, and creeds, from the latest alluvial deposit of Bengalis, with their soft Hinduism, to the aboriginal peoples and their hard angular faiths. In Europe the primeval tribes have disappeared from the range of observation into the twilight of hypothesis. Scholars stand like Hamlet in the Elsinore graveyard and see the bones of forgotten nations thrown up at their feet. They muse over the hollow skull, measure the facial angles and labour to reconstruct the lost speech. But the tongueless jaw and empty socket yield to them much the same conclusion as they did to the moralising prince—that there has been a fine revolution if we had but the trick to know it. Orissa exhibits a profusion of such primitive races, not in a fossil state, but warm and breathing, living apart in their own

<sup>1</sup> "*Orissa*," by W. W. Hunter. London: Smith & Elder, 1872.



communities amid a world of suggestive types and links that have elsewhere disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is this wondrous land less rich in materials for a history of Indian religions. To find a parallel to the fervour which animates the Hindu we must look back to the age of faith, when art and literature had no inspiration save Christianity. For him the gods and the heroes with whom they deigned to consort are living things, and the traits of bravery, unselfishness, and womanly devotion with which his legends teem are graven deep in the national character. Now Orissa is for two hundred millions of Hindus even more than Jerusalem is for the Christian and Mecca for the followers of the Prophet. It is the earthly abode of Jagannath, the "Lord of the World," the people's God, to be adored and propitiated with a devotion unknown in the frigid north. From every part of India a stream of pilgrims flows to the sacred city of Puri, and many thousands perish from disease and exposure, content to prove their devotion by surrendering life itself.

Hunter sailed for Orissa on 25th January 1870. The incidents of the tour are described in daily letters to his wife, who tarried at Suri with the two boys.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

January 28, 1870.

Here we are still in the Hugli. We have been delayed in the most ridiculous manner, first by the wheel giving way and all the spokes flying just before we left our moorings, secondly by losing the tide, and now by the darkness setting in just as the tide was most favourable. The net result is that, after a thirty-one hours' journey, we have done just five hours' work. I was perfectly satisfied, for, while the other passengers were grumbling yesterday, I buckled to and wrote an article for the *Pioneer*, and so made five sovereigns for my dear wife and boys. To-day I have been reading Lord Derby's translation of Homer, resting brain and body the while. We arrived at False Point on the 28th, after a delightful run from the Sandheads. Every hour I regretted that you and the bairns were not with me. Nothing can be more charming than the Indian ocean in January. Scarcely a breath of wind, and the air so soft and cool as to make the act of breathing a pleasure. We shall reach Gopalpur to-morrow. The passengers are few in number—only two captains, one with his

<sup>1</sup> "Orissa," vol. i. p. 3.



wife and family. I am sincerely grateful that we are not in the army. The domestic details of a soldier's life are really terrible. Mrs. — has no nurse and three children aged eight, six, and eighteen months respectively. The eldest has his arm in a sling, and cannot help his mother, and the poor husband has to do all manner of things, down to feeding the baby and changing its wrappings. They are nice people, however, he awfully delicate and going home on sick leave, and she a brave little woman with plenty of fun in her, though terribly worn and thin.

*February 2nd.*

I arrived at Puri at 12.30 P.M., and after a hard day's work at the records, sit down to write to you. I had a bad headache yesterday, probably because I worked too hard and too soon after the Sunday attack. But to-day I am myself again, and I only allude to my health to prove that I have no secrets from you. I started from Chatrapur on Monday for Rambha, on the great Chilka Lake.<sup>1</sup> I passed through the deserted village of Ganjam, once the capital of the Madras district of that ilk, but depopulated by a terrible fever in 1815. The Government was doubtful as to its fitness to continue a district headquarters, and sent two doctors to report. When one died and the other turned lunatic, it accepted these facts as conclusive, and transferred the capital to Chatrapur. Then we entered a glorious mountain pass in a region of bamboo jungle, and peacocks which were so tame that they strutted by the wayside, daintily picking up food and spreading their tails in an unconcerned pride. Then through a noble avenue of banyans which formed a covered way of foliage with the stars peeping through, down to Rambha, where I found the Government pinnace, the *Maid of the Lake*, waiting for me. We started at 8 P.M., and crept along through the night at about a mile an hour, and next morning sailed slowly among stately mountains and rocky islets on the frontier line between Madras and Bengal. By 4 P.M. my headache passed off, and I enjoyed sweeping through the shallows seawards, and the deep channel communicating with the Bay of Bengal, steering myself and tacking against the wind. About 7 A.M. I landed at the point nearest to Puri and found a palanquin waiting to take me there.

*February 8th.*

I could not write yesterday, being tired to death with the preceding forty hours' work. We started from Puri at 1 A.M. on Saturday and reached Kanarak at daylight. I spent the day minutely investigating the ruined temple of the Sun, and I shall never forget the passionate sculpture of that famous shrine. On

<sup>1</sup> This is a shallow depression, the result of a battle between sea and river, separated by a narrow spit of sand from the Bay of Bengal. It is slightly larger than Huntingdonshire (207,000 acres).



my return to Puri on Sunday evening I visited the spot where the dead bodies of pilgrims are burned—a sandy slope facing the west, surrounded on three sides with temples, shrines, and monasteries, and the sea rolling in on the fourth. A poor old woman was brought there for cremation. She had started from Indor about four months ago, and of her party of twenty-five, three are already dead. The corpse was first moistened with sea water and then placed on the pyre. The party had already paid 250 rupees to the priests, and as all their money was spent the leader has given a bond for eighty rupees, to be repaid on his return home. This evening we dine with the Magistrate and play whist. I am sick of these late hours. Men are simply fools to waste their time over cards. Would that you were with me, for I should have an excuse for not joining them, but as I am a bachelor *pro tem*. I should be churlish to refuse.

February 9th.

Yesterday I inspected the District Jail, a clean, tidy, healthy and hard-working establishment with capital vegetable gardens. Among the prisoners were thirty-seven hill-men, the relics of forty-eight sent here in December 1868. Eleven dead already and two more sinking. My blood boils to think of the way we bully these poor tribesmen. Their only offence was obeying their chief's behests. . . . This morning I have been hard at work making extracts from the old records, but snatched an hour to refresh myself by reading the "Winter's Tale," that most romantic of Shakespeare's comedies. Then the Maharaja of Khurda called on me. He is a boy of fourteen, and was laden with jewellery and attended by a motley throng of followers with elephants, caparisoned horses, bands of musicians, &c. His vakil, or representative, told me the story of the sunken fortunes of the family. It was touching enough.

February 12th.

We started from Puri (the District Magistrate and myself) on Wednesday evening by palanquin, and reached Khandgiri, forty miles north, at daybreak. It is an ancient Buddhist shrine, with temples, caves, and monasteries cut from the solid rock, some of them 2000 years old. Next day we moved to Bhuvaneswar, a great city of temples dedicated to Siva the Destroyer. On the same evening we parted, the Magistrate returning to Puri and I wending my way to Cuttack. My work is getting on famously. I will write a really great book; at least I have all the materials for one. I feel every day that it is the first grand chance I have had in life; and I hope to prove equal to it.

February 20th.

Here I am again in comfortable quarters after three days' travelling through highland jungles. The forest was sometimes so dense



that my palanquin fairly came to a standstill, and the bearers had to break a passage through the thicket. Once we had a terrible alarm caused by a tiger which was said to have carried off a bullock tethered behind my tent. I am sceptical about this as well as other minor alarms by the way. At any rate there is no fear of your precious husband's life, for we march in a great band through the jungle with torches blazing before and behind my palanquin; and accidents never happen to Europeans.<sup>1</sup> In point of fact I slept as comfortably as in a feather bed, except for the incessant rubbing of overhanging branches against my litter giving out sounds like the rattle of musketry. This eventually lulled me into a deep sleep, from which I was every now and then awakened by a ferryman's demand for *bakhshish* when we crossed some river. I visited three of the semi-independent Rajas and was received with much pomp—elephants, swordsmen, matchlock-men with their fuses burning accompanied me in all my marches. I arrived at Cuttack on Sunday morning and attended the Baptist Church. I am now starting for the temple of the Brahmo Samáj with their chief apostle, who has come to conduct the service; and in the evening I will go to the Roman Catholic Chapel.

March 6th.

I was greatly taken with the Catholic Schools here (Balasor). The principal is a Belgian, a learned and courtly old gentleman, who is building his church with his own hands. He drew the plans, made the model, and is now finishing the difficult masonry of the pillars. He pays for nothing but labour, getting his woodwork from the jungle and his bricks from a tank he is digging in the Convent garden. The lime he brings from the dry beds of rivers. He is like Ezra or one of the old Jewish Prophets building the Temple. The little community consists of two Belgian Jesuits, as many old Westphalian nuns, and a pretty young Lady Superior from Aberdeen. It is delightful to see so many nations uniting to do good to these poor famine orphans.

The middle of March found Hunter back in Calcutta, and settled with his family at 5 Elysium Row, a large furnished house in the quietest part of the city. The hot weather months were given to "Orissa," and marshalling the vast and undigested mass of materials which poured in from the host of collaborators! on the Gazetteer. Some idea is

<sup>1</sup> This is true of recent years, for tigers have learned by bitter experience the deadliness of our weapons of precision. Things were different in the days of long, single-barrelled, flintlock pieces. In 1780 Lieutenant Munro, who had landed with some shipmates from an Indiaman at Sagar Island, at the mouth of the Hugli, to shoot deer, was carried off by a tiger while sitting with his friends round a fire which they had kindled as a signal for a boat to bring them off.



given of the difficulties under which he laboured by a letter from Mr. John Beames, Magistrate of Balasor, who, as a profound scholar in Aryan lore, was able to appreciate the magnitude of Hunter's task.

From MR. JOHN BEAMES, C.S.

November 12, 1869.

I have just received the very interesting series of questions relating to the history and geography of the Province destined to supply materials for your Gazetteer. For myself I can safely promise that they shall be answered as accurately and intelligently as possible. Unfortunately Balasor is a very uninteresting district; but I will endeavour to give you some information about the little known tributary Mahals of Nilgiri and Muhrbhanj, properly Mayurbhanj, or "Peacock Country." I only wish I were still in Purnia. I was four years Collector there, and made many notes upon it. Purnia is interesting because it illustrates, better than any district in Bengal, the old Mughal imperial system of giving large grants of land in remote parts of India to importunate *ummadwars*<sup>1</sup> and its evil results. The great Persian zemindars of Purnia still keep up their connection with Isfahan, and are in every way an interesting set. My object in writing, however, is to notice a point which has probably occurred to you ere this. Personally I may venture to call myself a brother of the craft, as my tolerably numerous contributions to the R.A.S. of London and its Calcutta offspring testify. But how many Collectors in Bengal do you think will care a sixpence for your Gazetteer? How many of them will be bored by the whole thing and hand it over to Babu Ghose or Bose to expatiate upon? How many will have time for it, or the taste and learning which fit them to be your collaborators? If you want to see the result of the combined knowledge of the Lower Provinces on the subject of caste, for instance, please look at the Appendix to Dr. Mouat's report on Jails for 1868, where you will find a mass of crudities, absurdities, and errors which is positively astounding, with a few valuable facts *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, and those generally supplied by the Doctor. Now I would venture to suggest that, instead of leaving the important task to Magistrate-Collectors, you should apply to Government to make it over to a European assistant specially selected for each district. They would be your subordinates for this work; and many of them have knowledge and the necessary love of the subject. I speak disinterestedly, for, as regards Balasor,

<sup>1</sup> A Persian word used by Anglo-Indians to connote the greedy horde of office-seekers with which every one in a position of power is beset. It is derived from the exordium of postulants, who, when asked what they want, reply: *Banda ummadwar hai*. "Your slave is *hopeful* that."



I mean to answer your questions myself. It will be an amusement for me in the camping season, for I don't shoot and am more interested in human beings than in tigers. There is no part of India of which we know less than our oldest possessions, Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. I declare that when I went to the Punjab, though we had only held the province for nine years, I found more information in the office about caste, history, and geography than I have ever seen in Lower Bengal which has been ours for more than a century. I do not wish to disparage my old Haileybury chums, who have many and great merits; but I was one of five book-worms at college out of my whole term of thirty-two men. The competition-wallahs are certainly more suited for your work than their seniors; and I tremble to think of the avalanche of fact and fiction which will be showered on your devoted head if the Gazetteer be left to District Magistrates—in other words, to the Ghose and Bose party.

His preoccupations were increased by the birth of a third son, which occurred on his own birthday, the 15th July.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the young mother had passed safely through the perilous weeks which followed, Hunter started on another of those rapid tours of inspection which enabled him to give so much life and colour to his descriptions of scenery. His objective was the districts of Eastern Bengal and the southern portions of Assam, not yet a separate administration. Taken together, they are to the full as curious as Orissa itself. The rain-clouds which sweep inland from the Bay of Bengal during the monsoon burst on the mountain wall which bounds India on the north-east and discharge their contents in a deluge of which inhabitants of the temperate zone can form no conception. The flood is swelled by the network of rivers which drain the Himalayan slopes. Thus, during the rainy months, the traveller's boat passes through a chain of temporary lakes, termed *bils*, which are fringed by villages raised on the *débris* of past generations above the flood, and by crops which struggle with it successfully. Darwin's eyes would have been gladdened by the instances seen on all sides of the workings of that great natural law which gives all living things the power to adapt themselves to their environment. The human denizens of this submerged tract and their cattle are almost amphibious, while

<sup>1</sup> Now Captain William Chevers Hunter, of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, serving in a staff appointment in India.



the rice-plant grows with the current which seeks to drown it, and is reaped in water fifteen feet deep. Jute, which has worked a revolution in many of our textile industries, has here its habitat, and shows an equally stubborn determination not to be submerged. Further northwards the outlying spurs of the Himalayan system stretch into the districts of Silhet and Cachar, and have been compelled by British enterprise to yield a tribute of tea. Eastern Bengal exhibits as persistent a struggle for existence as any part of the world. Hunter left Calcutta for a few weeks' sojourn in this unique tract on 1st August, and has left his impressions by the way in letters to his wife and a pencil diary hastily written up at the close of each eventful day.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

August 7, 1870.

After a delightful week of rest and fresh air, I am now within two hours of Silhet. I arrived at Dacca from Kushtia on the 2nd, and changed into this river steamer. On the 6th we cast anchor off Chatak, whence there is an exquisite view of the hills, with waterfalls tumbling from crag to crag for hundreds of feet. Between Kushtia and Dacca the scenery is much like what we saw in our river trips on the Ganges, except that there was even less land and more water. After Dacca we launched forth on the mighty Meghna, with a wide horizon of water on every side. From this point we proceeded upwards through various channels. First came cane-brakes and chaotic swamps, then a land of tall grasses and long-stemmed rice struggling to keep its head above water. By degrees the banks on either side rose higher, and the rice meads were divided by the strips of turf usual in Bengal. Then solid ground appeared, with bamboo and plantain groves and orchards of the dull green mango. During the first two days of our trip the villages stood on little mounds rising from the waste of the water. To-day they are overshadowed by the clumps of palms, tamarind, and mango which we know so well.

DIARY, 14th August.—Here land grows faster than population. The ancient prosperity of Bengal, which made it the treasure-house of the old Mughals and gave us the means to conquer India, was due to the fact that numbers were kept down by war, rapine and floods, while the land-forming process went on apace. Compare the high rates of rent current in old settled districts with the low ones met with in tracts where the battle between river and sea is still going on. The Chatta bil, or lake, is a lovely winding stretch of deep brown water studded with islands which are a mass of foliage. It is bounded by tillas, or outlying mountain spurs, laid



out in trim rows of tea, with red earth furrows between them. They are topped by the planters' bungalows, while their coolie-lines stretch lower down. In the cold weather the *bil* is mostly solid ground, with a sluggish stream meandering through it between banks of reeds ten feet high. When riding over it at that season, you can almost imagine one sees the land rising, and are reminded of the description of chaos in the "Morte d'Arthur." You expect to see a megatherium rolling in the slime. After the grass is burnt the whole is a brown expanse, with patches of vivid green which mark a fathomless bog. These are called by the planters "nagtails" (nag-tal, *i.e.*, snake-plain).

Silchar, the headquarters of the great tea-planting district of Cachar, was reached on the 18th August. It was the most interesting district which Hunter had yet lighted on, and he writes enthusiastically of the fishing guilds, rural associations, and wild tribes to be found there.<sup>1</sup> Thence he went by river steamer to Silhet, the capital of another centre of the tea industry, where he met Sir William Grey on tour in his well-known yacht *Rhotas*. He was most graciously received, and placed next to the Lieutenant-Governor at a dinner given by him. On the 24th August he started homewards as the guest of Mr. Davidson, a well-known tea-planter, who like himself was bound for Kushtia. The diary and letters continue:—

DIARY, August 24–25.—We left at 7 A.M., and our crew of eight men rowed us merrily down the stream for two hours, when we struck across the flooded country. At four a storm-cloud swept over us from the south-west, and a hurricane arose, before which we drifted hopelessly. At last we managed to drive a stake deep into the muddy bank and lash our craft thereto. Davidson told me some curious tiger stories. He said that a tiger will rarely attack a buffalo, whose neck is too broad and fleshy behind to allow him to make his teeth meet in the spine—his way of killing. The huge retreating horns are also a protection against his spring, and when he tries one he is generally hurled from his quarry's back with a broken rib or two. The peasants sometimes ride a buffalo in the middle of a herd into a tiger-jungle and drive the beast out, and they protect their cows by letting buffaloes graze between them and the tiger's haunts. Boating is the sole mode of conveyance in these parts, and children learn to paddle their own canoes almost as soon as they can crawl. I have just seen a boy of ten propelling an empty boat at five miles an hour with a single paddle. The great pride of a village lad is his boat.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter of 19th August 1870.



When he sees any one looking at him he "shows off," getting speed by increasing the number and not the power of his strokes. Yesterday we saw a race between two boats carrying twenty boy paddlers and three men, one to steer, another to give the stroke, and a third singing to encourage the crew. The time was very fast, and there was an immense splashing, which enveloped the boats with spray. The Hindu boatmen are more dexterous and better tempered than the sulky, pithless Mohammedans. They are employed exclusively in the long five-oared boats which ply between the different bazaars. The passengers are packed beneath the mat awnings, and the crew sing merrily in time as they dash through the still waters of the *bils*. The Mohammedans rarely sing, but gasp out "Allah-il-Allah" in unison. It is pretty in the mornings to see the villagers—men, women, and countless children—going to market in their respective canoes with a little cargo of saleable articles, just to give a pecuniary interest to the expedition. Rural commerce in Eastern Bengal is carried on almost entirely in markets rather than shops, and the principal street of every village is a broad space with double rows of mat sheds down the middle to serve as a market-place.

28th August. *Tea notes.*—A yield of 190 to 240 lbs. of tea per acre is considered remunerative.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Davidson gets 400 lbs. and sells it at an average of 2s. To open a tea-garden of 200 acres costs £8000. In the sixth year it should yield 100 per cent. gross, with a net profit of 50 per cent. I asked him, "Supposing you were obliged to go to England, how would you manage?" Answer: "I would get out of it; tea is not a thing to dabble in."

Manuring tea-gardens is not yet a proved success. The cultivation of mountain spurs, which is now universal, will eventually be abandoned, owing to the destruction of the soil by rain. Terracing mitigates the evil without averting it. To plant in rows running down the hill is fatal.

TO MR. THOMAS GRIBBLE.

August 28, 1870.

I am returning from a tour in the Eastern frontier districts. The up journey I made by steamer, doing the 800 miles from Kushtia in seven days. I travel in a big rowing boat, with a cottage built on its deck, through great fens, five to twenty feet deep, covered for thousands of square miles with bright, green rice, and intersected by black channels. These are the highways of Eastern Bengal, and are as full of life as the old Salisbury road in coaching days. At night the myriad boats bring to at some well-

<sup>1</sup> 400 lbs. of tea per acre is still considered a fair average yield in Assam. In Ceylon the tea-plant is more productive. One of the gardens there has yielded 1000 lbs. per acre for eighteen successive years.



known staging village, whose streets are covered with every variety of craft, from the light canoe to the floating haystack, carrying rice and jute. The fires, the eating, singing, and quarrelling make it a lively scene. The villages are generally built on islands, sometimes well raised and buried in a glory of tropical foliage, sometimes on mounds from which the cottages rise as naked as those of a new London suburb. The streets are all canals, and the pathways watercourses, covered with luxuriant jungle, and forming green arcades. The chief town is a Venice of mats and thatching, in which the two-masted boats discharge their cargoes at the shop doors.

DIARY, 31st August.—Hundreds of square miles are now under water here, but the people take it quietly. In one house the cowshed was nearly submerged, and all the smaller buildings had collapsed; but the family were seated on an island of a few feet square, the mother husking rice for the dinner, and the grand-dame investigating the population of one of the little girl's heads. The men were out fishing. A raft made of plantain stems was moored alongside as a precaution against a sudden rise. In one case a raft of this sort had been left floating in the cowshed, and I saw the animals standing on it and calmly munching their floor.

1st September.—Jute has now driven indigo from Eastern Bengal, and one sees the ruined factories peeping out of acres densely covered with the usurper. Enormous crops of both were got at first, but, under the system employed, the cultivation was fatal to the soil, except on the margin of rivers and swamps which receive a discharge of silt. Indigo would be a most economical crop if all the refuse from the vats were returned to the fields. Its decay is in no small measure due to the wasteful ignorance of the planter, who took everything from the land and gave nothing back. The same prodigality continues in the case of jute. The long stems are cut and allowed to ferment in pools, emitting the foulest odours. Then they are beaten on the surface of the water to remove the fibre from the fleshy core. The latter is dried into the form of white wands, great piles of which are sold as fuel instead of serving as manure. Jute has two great advantages over indigo. It will grow on lands exposed to heavy inundations, for the plantation intercepts the silt and grows with the floods, and the manufacture is simplicity itself and needs no European supervision.

In the meantime the health of Hunter's second son, Brian, was causing deep anxiety. He was a beautiful and engaging child of two, idolised by his parents, and the pet of the entire household. In August he was attacked by a high fever, and Mrs. Hunter's letters grew so despondent that her husband cut short his tour and hurried back to Calcutta. During the hot



months it is a residence which tries the strongest constitution, for the oppression of the hot, damp, windless days is unbearable. The only chance of saving the little flickering life was to court the cool breezes which sweep down the great Eastern rivers. On September the 7th, therefore, the Hunters, with their three children, went to Kushtia by rail, and thence by boat to Dacca. The rest of the sad story is told in a letter despatched to his mother, when all was over:—

*October 2, 1870.*

We reached Dacca on the 11th September, and stayed a day with my friend, Mr. David Lyall. The wee man, Brian, was greatly taken with a small, white Japanese dog, and he absolutely got on his feet and tottered after it, with the help of a servant. Next day we started on a large sea-going boat, with three apartments, and a crew of nine men, and another boat in attendance for our kitchen and servants. For the first two days, as we approached the Bay of Bengal, Brian improved rapidly. But on the 14th we had to anchor alongside a thick jungle, as the river was twelve miles across, and running like a mill stream. The night was insufferably hot, and, although we sat up, servants and all, in relays, to fan him, his fever returned in the morning. On the 16th he was almost exhausted, but was kept alive by minute doses of brandy. I had brought two heavy bricks with me and a little coffin—a mournful precaution.

I need not follow the stricken parents in their wanderings from place to place, everywhere received with sympathy and ready help, which were powerless to stay the hand of death. Brian daily grew worse, and on 1st October the beating of the heart was almost imperceptible. But the poor child recovered sufficiently to be brought back to Calcutta for medical advice, which is rarely obtainable on the rivers of Bengal. The letter proceeds:—

We reached Calcutta at 5 A.M., and at 7 Dr. Ewart was with us. Poor Ewart! He sat for nearly an hour with a face of dismay, slowly extracting from us every fact of the last four weeks. He it was who saved my life, and he is a dear friend to us, while as a physician he has no superior in India. In this country people struggle against visible death in a manner unknown at home. Every moment of respite is a present victory, and gives one more chance of ultimate triumph. For three days Brian has been senseless—to all intents and purposes dead. But we do not despair, although the sight of his fallen jaw and glazed eyes rends



our hearts. . . . Brian still lingers on, but oh, how changed! Even his little sweet ways that endeared him to every one have disappeared, and he lies alive and nothing more. We used to marvel at his beautiful intelligence, and while he had strength to turn his eyes he continued to show kindness to those around him. His love for his new-born brother was that of a man for the child of his old age, rather than the love of an infant. Here is a page of my diary during that sad river trip:—

*1st October.*—Brian is dying. He dozes all day, but is free from pain. Champagne is poured down his throat every hour, and chicken broth every hour and a half. He has just rallied for a moment to make signs for his baby brother to be laid beside him, and then he patted the red chubby cheeks with his skeleton fingers. It was a sight touching beyond words—the weird old face, with its ghostly pallor and sunken jaw, side by side with the blooming little Willy. When the latter cried and was taken into the adjoining cabin, Brian mutely begged to be carried after him and placed by his side. There he lay looking up at the happy unconscious infant at its mother's breast.

Dr. Ewart came this morning. He gives us no hope. Brian can no longer digest his food. Still I begged him to call in Dr. Fayrer,<sup>1</sup> the doctor who has the greatest reputation in such cases. Nothing suggested itself to Dr. Fayrer at the last consultation, but it is just possible that something may strike him now.

Since writing as above, we have been to sea and returned. All is over. Doctors Ewart and Fayrer thought on Saturday (8th) that there was just a chance of saving our sweet one by going to England at once. This was at 3.30 p.m., and the P. and O. mail steamer started at daybreak next morning. We hurriedly packed up a few things, broke up our establishment, paid off the servants, and settled for the sale of the horses. It was arranged that Jessie should go with the children straight to England, and Sir William Grey kindly gave me leave to accompany them to Madras or Ceylon. So on Saturday we all left the house at 7 a.m., and got on board the steamer. Our dear little one seemed to revive as we approached the open sea. He made signs to be taken to our arms, and would have none of the servants. But at 4.30 he began to sink, and half an hour later, in the glorious sunset, his sweet spirit fled. He breathed his last in my arms, and immediately the pain and care passed from his face, and the fresh, happy look of infancy came back. We put a nosegay in his hands, our gardener's parting gift, and then he was prepared for his funeral at sea. We had anchored for the night at the Sandheads, and next morning the captain, with the consideration which is peculiar to the P. and O., steamed back to Diamond Harbour and landed us. And so

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Joseph Fayrer, Bart.



the great ship, with her tall masts and mighty engines churning the broad river, moved away, stately and beautiful, with our dearest one lying at rest under the union-jack. He was to be buried out at sea, beyond the Hugli currents.

This first bereavement sunk deeply into Hunter's heart. It was one of his characteristics in later life to curtail the period of mourning; to hide his sorrow from the world and even from his friends. But we find him recurring to little Brian's death long after the first paroxysms of grief had spent their force. He wrote to his mother from Suri.

*November 2, 1870.*

We are here for ten days, and the exquisite calm of the place has done us good in mind and body. Our lost one is constantly in our minds, waking and sleeping, though we know it was for the best. His life had been a constant struggle . . . In many things he was wonderfully, even painfully, precocious, and in some he seemed to be more advanced than ourselves. His beauty was of a type so rare and spiritual that strangers noticed it, and even in a large place like Calcutta it was talked of. He seemed to be absolutely at home with nature, the fearless friend and benefactor of the brute creation. Our big, rough phaeton horses, which give no end of trouble to their grooms, were his confidants and tender companions. On our last sad river voyage the leaves of trees were his favourite toys, and many a time did we stop our boat under the dense foliage to pluck some of it for him. He would revive for half-an-hour to play with it, and then sink back into utter exhaustion. He had a most sensitive disposition; the least look of displeasure made him weep, while his love for the beautiful was most striking. He reminded us of the mystical child whom Novalis describes: "Of these (the world scholars), some have been but a short time learning, some longer. One was still a child. Scarcely was he come among us ere our teacher was for passing him without any further instruction. He had large dark eyes with an azure ground; his skin shone like lilies, and his locks were like little clouds when evening is coming on apace. He used to smile with infinite earnestness. 'One day,' said the teacher, 'he will come again, and then our lessons will cease.'" The idea of the German mystic was realised in our poor Brian. After death he wore such a look of release and repose! And so, when our sons grow away from us into the independent existence of manhood, there is one who will be secured to us for ever, and will continue in our minds as a little child.

Those who appreciate the pathos which finds its highest expression in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry, will recall those exquisite lines from "Our Dead":—



"How the children leave us, and no traces  
 Linger of that smiling angel-band;  
 Gone, for ever gone, and in their places  
 Weary men and anxious women stand.

Yet we have some little ones still ours,  
 They have kept the baby smile we know,  
 Which we kissed one day and hid with flowers  
 On their dead white faces long ago."

On 16th December, Hunter paid a flying visit to Calcutta, and sought distraction from carking cares at the opera. This was a highly exotic institution, kept in fitful existence by the advent of strolling companies from Italy during the winter months. His attention was riveted by the baritone, who sang splendidly in "*Lucrezia Borgia*," in spite of evident physical weakness. In souls of a noble caste suffering enlarges the sympathies. As Madame de Stael wrote in "*Delphine*": "*On peut encore faire servir au bonheur des autres une vie qui ne nous promet à nous mêmes que des chagrins.*" His heart went out to a forlorn stranger cast on a society which regarded him with something of the old-fashioned English contempt for his class. On returning home he sent the singer pecuniary help, and a letter, which the recipient valued more highly:—

TO SIGNOR —

December 16, 1870.

I was much struck with your singing last night, and the more so because I saw that you had been in bad health, and I have since learned that you have been very ill. I, too, know what it is to wake up from a great illness and to find the return to the living world chill and strange. If the enclosed can in any way alleviate anxiety, or promote your convalescence, I shall feel myself honoured by your acceptance of it. To you I am a mere name, and shall continue so. To me you are an artist struggling nobly against weakness and disease.

Christmas was spent at Suri, the Hunters' first and best loved home. His diary shows the labour devoted to weaving the story of "*Orissa*," as well as the power possessed by strong and buoyant natures of stifling grief and viewing only the bright side of things:—

17th December.—To-day I pieced together my evidence about the Yavans, and reconstituted that lost race of warriors and kings—resuscitated, in fact, a buried dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "*Orissa*," vol. i. p. 206.



25th December.—In the afternoon we drove out to the ruins of Rajnagar and made a long excursion in the jungle, tracing the old city walls. A rustic lunch in the heart of the forest, and then I read aloud Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale." Then home in time for dinner by the light of a beautiful young moon.

28th December.—This day seven years ago we arrived at Suri. Happy and prosperous years has Jessie made them for me.

29th December.—Very unwell this morning. Throughout the night I never got the Yavans out of my head. Had to pull up short and resolve to write no more about them. Read Conington's Virgil, *Æn.* 9 and 10. Wrote a leader on the decentralisation of the finances for the *Englishman*, and a letter to Mr. John Strachey seriously broaching my ambition in connection with that paper.

This project was one of great importance to Hunter. His alliance with the Calcutta daily paper was of the closest, and he longed to cement it by gaining an interest in the proprietorship. The negotiations which followed with Mr. J. O'B. Saunders and Mr. John Strachey were conducted with the tact and business knowledge which were among Hunter's many gifts. In the end permission was accorded to his purchasing a quarter share. Thus he gained a substantial increase to his income, and the power to direct the *Englishman's* policy. His dream of founding an official organ on the model of the French *Moniteur* was never fully realised, but the *Englishman* under his guidance took a position which it has never lost—that of an impartial exponent of the views of Government, and an honest critic where animadversion was called for. The old spirit maintained by the Indian Press towards the powers that be died hard. Its last embodiment was in the *Observer*, a weekly journal, started on 4th February 1871 by some young lions of the Civil Service. Its editor was Captain R. D. Osborn, one of the rare instances produced by our Eastern army of military associated with literary talent.<sup>1</sup> The principles on which the new enterprise was to be conducted were laid down in a letter from the editor in acknowledgment of a kindly notice in the *Englishman*.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel R. D. Osborn afterwards wrote "Islam under the Arabs" (1876), and "Islam under the Khalifs of Baghdad," both regarded by students as models of the lucid and graceful treatment of a perplexing subject. He was a red-hot Radical and a perpetual thorn in the side of the Indian Government. He died from syncope after lawn tennis in 1889.



FROM CAPTAIN R. D. OSBORN.

February 10, 1871.

I apprehend, however, that you and the *Observer* will disagree in many things, but Her Majesty's Opposition are just as good servants of the State as her Government. My paper will, to a certain extent, represent the former. I myself, without the smallest hostility to the *personnel* of the administration, regard its system with intense aversion. It is an almost unmitigated evil, because it is opposed to all the rules which history shows to be conducive to real progress. This is the special work which I have set before myself—to disclose the true conditions of political progress, to show that our Indian ideals run counter to it, and to indicate the manner in which the two may generally be brought into harmony.

In a country ruled by a highly centralised bureaucracy and possessing no classes corresponding with those which supply the ranks of journalism at home, a platform so uncompromising was foredoomed to failure. Sir George Campbell succeeded Grey as Lieutenant-Governor in March 1871, and his hard angularity made him the *Observer's* constant butt. At length he was pilloried as Tiberius in a clever parody on Suetonius's scathing description of one of the worst of Rome's imperial tyrants. It became dangerous for any servant of the State to take in the paper; to write for it was professional ruin. After a brave struggle against a dwindling subscription list, the proprietors brought their venture to a close. Hunter's greeting to his audacious contemporary was the more creditable to his candour because he was himself about to join the body which the *Observer* regarded with special aversion.

Lord Mayo thought that his young henchman would work with a freer hand if he were directly under the Government of India. Hunter was, therefore, appointed to officiate as Under-Secretary in the Home Department,<sup>1</sup> and left Suri on 10th February to take up his new duties, which were distinct from those involved in the compilation of the *Gazetteer*. The routine of Secretariat work is described :—

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<sup>1</sup> Gazette notification, dated 13th February 1873.



TO MRS. HUNTER.

CALCUTTA, *February* 16, 1871.

Here I am, after my first day's work. I deal with all matters connected with the Judicial, Police, Education, Jail and one or two other departments. Each subject comes up in the shape of a bundle, of foolscap size, tied with red tape. Thirty of these came this morning in a big mahogany box. I have to wade through each in turn and gather up the separate threads as best I can. Then I write my opinion, or, if it be a question of pure routine, an official order, which is expanded by the clerks into a letter, to be signed by me next day. In important cases my views are passed on to my chief, Mr. E. C. Bayley, who adds his own, and sends the bundle to the Member of Council concerned. Here the mill generally stops, and the file comes back to me for drafting a letter in accordance with the Member's opinion. In cases of great moment, however, the pages float upwards to the Viceroy and are considered by the whole Council. This being my first day in the new harness, I have had to work slowly and patiently. I have polished off twenty-seven cases, and three remain, though it is nearly six o'clock. In the first two hours I found great difficulty in getting at the streamlet of fact in a desert of verbiage. But this is not the first office of which I have taken charge, and in four hours I was gaily careering through the ranks of the enemy.

On the morrow Hunter started for a brief visit to his family at Suri, and met with one of those accidents which Anglo-Indians so often owe to the opium-sodden dreaminess of the native servant. The diary tells the story, and compels us to admire the fortitude and devotion to duty shown by the sufferer.<sup>1</sup>

*17th February.*—After a long morning's work at the Home Office I left for Suri by the midday train. In driving from Sainthia station my syce, who was running before me to show the way in the dark—it was 8 P.M.—led me right over a high approach to a bridge into the watercourse below. The horses fell in a tangled mass, and the phaeton, upsetting, pitched me out, and landed with a fearful crash on my left leg. I managed to extricate myself from the ruins, and to crawl away on my hands and surviving leg. Tore up a shirt and bound the wounded limb, and was carried on a palanquin to Suri, arriving at 2 A.M. The doctor set the leg.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. H. Verner writes :—"I saw Hunter repeatedly in 1871 at 11 Middleton Row after his terrible accident. He was in great pain for days with a shattered leg, but, to my astonishment and admiration, he was reading, writing, dictating, with an energy and concentration which few persons in good health and entirely free from suffering could have equalled. I have never witnessed such a triumph of mind over body."



18th February.—High inflammation and fever all day. Wrote four letters to dictation, begging that my work might be sent up by the Home Office. It should come daily in boxes.

23rd February.—In bed with constant agony. Chloroform has no effect. Finished the second volume of "Waverley." What a kind heart was Sir Walter's!

24th February.—Bayley declines to send me any work. My office boxes came by a red-coated messenger, but they were full of grapes and apples, part of the State present from the Amir of Afghanistan, sent me by dear Lord Mayo, with a message of sympathy. No sleep. Read Merivale's "Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis"—a cantankerous demon.

1st March.—Carried to Sainthia, and thence by rail to Calcutta, where Jessie, my devoted nurse, had taken rooms for us all at 11 Middleton Row. Horribly crowded, but the children are wonderfully good. Ewart and Chevers find a compound fracture of both bones, with dislocation, the muscles torn, ligatures ruptured, and ankle joint terribly bruised. The bones were set and the leg put into splints.

5th March.—A weary time on my back, but have written articles almost every day for the *Englishman* since the 3rd, and have been solaced by a constant stream of visitors. Read the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," a chapter of Gibbon, and half a volume of Carlyle.

23rd March.—The bones have knit, but the sore is still open, and I am in constant pain. A hard day's work, but cheered by finding that my recommendations as Under-Secretary are nearly always accepted by Government. Among them one for the release of eight of the less guilty mutineers still under sentence of transportation for life.

3rd April.—Mr. Grant-Duff, in a speech in Parliament, mentioned as one of the bright features of our rule, that "a complete 'Gazetteer of India' has been entrusted to Dr. Hunter, whose 'Annals of Rural Bengal' attracted so much deserved attention three years ago."

At this time began the annual flitting of the Government of India to its summer capital, and the new Under-Secretary was able to exchange the heat of Calcutta for the "sweet, half-English, Himalayan air." Travelling by easy stages, with his wife and children, he reached Simla on the 15th April, and found quarters at Oaklands, a furnished house which "boasted of an archery ground and a croquet lawn—in other words, an ill-kept backyard without a blade of grass."<sup>1</sup>

Long weeks followed of constant suffering, intensified by

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 15th April 1871.



neuralgic attacks. But Hunter's spirit rose high above physical stress, and he contrived to render his double tale of work as Under-Secretary and Editor of the *Gazetteer*, while his hand was daily seen in the columns of the *Englishman*. Among the subjects which employed it was the Wahabi conspiracy, a movement which was then stirring Islam to its depths. Its originator was Abdul Wahab, an eighteenth-century Arab, who is worthy to rank with Luther and Calvin. There is, indeed, much in common between the sixteenth-century Reformation and that which he inspired. He raised his voice against the corruption which had sapped the pure monotheism preached by Mohammed. He took his stand on the Koran, denouncing as childish fables the mass of legend and tradition which had clustered round it. The idolatrous observances, the luxury and vice which defiled the holy places, were abominations in his sight. Wahabi tenets thus involved a reversion to purer ideals, the worship of God, the All-Just, All-Merciful, and obedience to the behests of His revealed word. Now its teachings declare that neither amity nor truce is possible with unbelievers. Countries governed by them are, in the opinion of strict Wahabis, the abodes of strife, to be brought by force within the fold. These doctrines brought Abdul Wahab's successors into collision with Mehemet Ali, the ruthless Viceroy of Egypt and, after a fierce struggle, they were extirpated in the land which gave them birth. But the spirit of the reformer eludes material force. In the darkest days of Wahabiism it was introduced into India by itinerant preachers of the type so graphically described by Hunter at the very outset of his career as journalist.<sup>1</sup> Patna became the centre of a propaganda aimed at the subversion of infidel rule, and in Eastern Bengal the teeming Mohammedan population adopted the Wahabi shibboleths. But British dominion was too firmly established to be attacked from within. The Patna wire-pullers sought a weak point in our armour, and found it on the North-Western frontier, where the mountains separating India from Afghanistan swarm with tribesmen perennially at war with their neighbours and each other. Here was established a rebel colony, maintained by the contributions of the elect; and the constant unrest was fanned into

<sup>1</sup> See p. 100.



flames by a new crusade among the highlanders. Punitive expeditions were undertaken against them with apparent success, but it became evident that the canker must be attacked at its very roots. A campaign was opened against the Patna conspirators, and their trials, which were in full swing in May 1871, rank as chief among Indian *causes célèbres*. Its varying fortunes were followed by Hunter in the *Englishman*, and his articles attracted the attention of Lord Mayo. On 30th May Hunter was requested by him to write a book on the burning question of the day: "Are Indian Musalmans bound by their religion to rebel against the Queen?"<sup>1</sup> He entered into the Viceroy's designs with a zeal that recognised no obstacle. In Professor Henry Blochmann, Principal of a great Mohammedan college in Calcutta, he found a mentor qualified to pilot him through the shoals of Arabic law and dogma, while the archives of Government furnished documents in abundance. His diary shows how marvellous was the speed with which he worked.

14th June.—Telegraphing to Calcutta daily for fresh light on my book. Every table buried in official records, and my head so full of the subject that I never quite forget it in my sleep.

29th June.—Finished the book. It will make about 220 pages, and has involved heavy research in the records of the Home, Foreign, and the Military departments, besides innumerable letters and telegrams. Did the actual writing in thirteen days.

30th June.—Sent off the last sheets to Trübner.

2nd September.—The MS. of my "Musalmans" reached Edinburgh on the 31st July, were finished off without proof-reading, and sent back to London on the 12th August, for distribution to the Ministry and the leading Members of both Houses.

8th September.—Received two most discouraging letters from England about the book. The first was from Trübner, warning me that there could not possibly be a demand for a work on India; another from Eastwick, M.P.,<sup>2</sup> with the single remark that I should have spelt the word "Musalmin."

20th September.—Mr. Norman, acting Chief Justice of Bengal, was assassinated at 11 A.M. by a Mohammedan fanatic on the steps of the High Court.

21st September.—The Viceregal Council sat all day to discuss an event which gives an awful emphasis to my book.

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 30th May 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. E. B. Eastwick was then Member for a Cornish borough. He had been Professor of Hindustani at the East India Company's College, Haileybury, and edited some admirable Persian texts.



England rang with the news. The demand for a work which cast a lurid light on the tragedy was enormous, and "The Indian Musalmans" soon passed into a second edition. It deserved this sudden leap into fame. Its author traced the history of a hitherto unknown movement, and discussed the questions at stake with judicial fairness. He demonstrated the existence within our borders of a persistently belligerent section, which was a constant danger to the Empire. He ascribed the evolution of this hostile camp to the injustice which had been meted out to our Mohammedan fellow-subjects. A ruling class had been deprived of all the sweets of office; a race of hereditary soldiers could hope for no advancement in our armies. What wonder, then, that men reduced to inaction and contumely should burn with resentment against a *régime* which had deprived them of their birthright? The effect on the national conscience was prompt and lasting. The Mohammedans of India owe to Hunter's courageous advocacy a recognition of their claims to share in the government and protection of their country.

The book received Lord Mayo's hearty approval, and the opinion of his advisers is reflected in a letter from Sir J. Fitz-James Stephen, a worthy successor of Maine in the great office of Legal Member of Council.

FROM SIR JAMES STEPHEN.

September 8, 1871.

I am very much obliged to you for a book which I have read with interest. It shows the truth of an opinion I have often expressed that John Bull is a well-meaning giant, but very nearly blind. *Me judice* it would be well worth our Government's while to create a special intelligence or historical department, that we might have some idea of the natural consequences of our actions.<sup>1</sup>

Though no one enjoyed relaxation with greater zest than Hunter, an inactive day was in his eyes a crime. He continued

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Fitz-James Stephen, K.C.S.I., left behind him on his retirement in 1872, a vast mass of legislation which lacked finish, because it was accomplished too quickly. He was a man of a Johnsonian turn of mind, and one of the greatest journalists of the Victorian era. After contributing materially to the task of codifying English law—still unfinished, thanks to the opposition of lawyers interested in preserving the existing chaos—he was raised to the bench, and died in 1894.



to labour on "Orissa," and completed the first volume. The editorship of the *Gazetteer* was no sinecure. He rendered Lord Mayo an account of his stewardship, and was appointed Director-General of Statistics in order to give him entire control over the operations in the various provinces.<sup>1</sup> Every spare hour was given to framing interminable lists of Indian proper names spelt on the Hunterian system, or inditing articles for the *Englishman*. At length outraged Nature rose in her accustomed revolt. The neuralgic attacks became more and more frequent, and congestion of the liver supervened—"this too," he sighs, "in spite of all my care. The only thing I don't obey the doctor in is working. As long as I remain at my post I must work." At this crisis it occurred to him that, as the bulk of the printed matter collected for previous statistical inquiries was to be found in the India Office Library, he might assimilate it there, without entailing any additional expenditure to the State. Lord Mayo saw that English air alone could restore his over-tasked ally to health, and granted him nine months' cumulative leave.<sup>2</sup> On 18th November Hunter turned his face homewards. The diary gives some of his impressions during the slow progress to Calcutta.

*24th November.*—At Delhi I took Jessie to the Jama Masjid, where there was a great and devout congregation, compared with which the Mohammedans one sees at St. Sophia are mere Mayfair chapel-goers.

*28th November.*—Reached Agra at 5 A.M., staying with H. G. Keene.<sup>3</sup> After dinner we all drove to the Taj Mahal. No words can paint its angelic purity and beauty under the full moon's rays.

*1st December.*—At Allahabad, the guest of Sir William and Lady Muir. Had two anxious hours with him and C. A. Elliott about *Gazetteer* matters. They were at first inclined to fight the Government of India, but by degrees I carried all my points and left them in a good humour.

*3rd December.*—Arrived at Suri. Charmed with the exquisite bright quietude of the place, its great green trees and rolling landscapes.

*20th December.*—Our last night in this sweet place. Worked

<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Government of India, dated 8th September 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Orders of the Government of India, dated 15th December 1871.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Keene was Judge of Agra. He is the author of "The Fall of the Mughal Empire" (1876), "A History of India" (1893), &c.



till dark on the "Calamities of Orissa." Every one called to bid us good-bye, and at 9 P.M. we started for Calcutta.

*28th December.*—Went to Government House at 3 o'clock to take leave of Lord Mayo by his special desire. He was most kind, and gave me introductions to the Duke of Argyle, Lord Salisbury, and Sir Stafford Northcote. In the evening we embarked on board the Messageries steamer *Meinam*, bound for Marseilles.



## CHAPTER XII

### HOW TO FIGHT FAMINE

HUNTER reached England while the stir created by his disclosures of Wahabi plotting was at a climax. The newspapers were full of "The Indian Musalmans," and he was received by the magnates of the India Office as one who had rendered signal service to the Empire. Invitations poured in on all sides, but anxiety on the score of Dr. Murray's health compelled him to hasten to Lasswade. He found the venerable doctor too feeble to leave his chair without help, and on the night of his arrival he "lay for long hours awake, thinking of him and making good resolutions."<sup>1</sup>

His next duty was rendered to his parents, who had sought a refuge from the turmoil of a chequered life at Deanburn, near Hawick. There he spent a quiet Sunday after church with his mother, and found the visit a precious opportunity for renewing the memories of boyhood. Soon after his return to Lasswade he was stunned by the news flashed homewards of Lord Mayo's assassination by a Mahammadan fanatic in the Andaman Isles. When he had recovered from the shock he called to mind a suggestion made in India by Major Owen Burne that he should undertake a record of the administration which had closed so tragically. Gratitude for the appreciation shown him by the murdered Viceroy made him resolve to tell the people of England how grievous their loss had been, and he asked the members of Lord Mayo's staff to furnish materials for a biography.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the first volume of "Orissa" was rapidly passing through the printer's hands at Edinburgh, and the correction of the proofs gave some relief to gloomy thoughts. Time the healer poured its balm on his wounded

<sup>1</sup> Diary, 1st February 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Letters to Major Owen Burne, Sir James Stephen, and Hon. John Strachey of 22nd February 1872.



spirit. A few weeks later he was able to enjoy the society of his old college friend, Mr. R. Vary Campbell, who had joined the Edinburgh bar.

DIARY, 10th March, 1872.—Staying a few days with Campbell. Drank hock and talked metaphysics with him till church time, 2.15. Then heard a powerfully analytical sermon from Dr. Wallace. It was true and rational, but the only palpable effect on the congregation was seen in the pranks of a small boy in front of me, who seemed to think it a huge joke and shook with suppressed laughter.

On 31st March the Lasswade household was stirred by very different feelings. A daughter was born to the Hunters, who lived to be the joy of their hearts and to wring them by her early loss. And, as if to point the sad moral that the cradle and the grave are never far apart, Dr. Murray was struck down by an apoplectic seizure, to which he soon succumbed. The closing scenes of his useful life are noted in the diary.

8th April.—The Doctor seems little better, and is always so kind and patient. He constantly speaks of the young mother. When I told him she was doing well, he pressed my hand and said, "You can't think what pleasure that gives me."

11th April.—Mail day. Did my Indian press work with a heavy heart. The Doctor struggles bravely with his increasing weakness and fever in spite of his eighty-two years.

15th April.—Dr. Murray passed away at 4 A.M. Not a single complaint, and conscious to the last. I rode to Cockpen to register Mabel's birth and his death at the same time. This sad event, coming after the long strain of finishing my book, has told upon me.

A few days later he received the first volume of "Orissa" complete from the printer; and sent it to Messrs. Smith and Elder, who had brought out the "Annals of Rural Bengal," with a request that they would undertake the publication. After a brief negotiation they agreed to do so, on terms which proved Hunter to have attained a considerable position in literature. The continued success of his previous work, "The Indian Musalmans," was not without effect on the publisher's decision. The reviews did full justice to Hunter's learning and moderation, and to the moral courage which led him to denounce our neglect of Mahammadan aspirations. The only



discordant note was struck by an article in the *Westminster Review*, from the pen of Captain R. O. Osborn, and Hunter departed in this case from his principle never to answer critics.

TO THE EDITOR, "WESTMINSTER REVIEW."

April 30, 1872.

From the evidence before me in 1871, I felt that India had again grown electric. . . . No outrage had then occurred, but I obtained the late Viceroy's leave to make use of the official documents on which my impression was based. But a few days before my work reached Calcutta, a Mahammadan struck down the Chief Justice, and another has since stabbed Lord Mayo. The last mail brings news of the arrest of a Musalman fanatic while preaching sedition to our native troops, and in the autumn the High Court confirmed the sentence on a second batch of Wahabi traitors. We have no right to charge that sect with all the sad events of the last eight months, but they have given a painful emphasis to my warnings as to the existence of a mass of discontent. At times it may be convenient for a Government with vast loans to raise to underrate the import of such signs, and the cry of "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" will always be welcome to the officials immediately concerned. But this attitude, if it be generally accepted by high-class reviews, will sooner or later lose us India. The secret of Lord Mayo's success as a Viceroy was that he had the courage at all times and in all matters to face the facts.

On 18th May he left Mrs. Hunter at Lasswade to console her stricken mother, and went to London to fulfil the main object of his return to Europe. We have seen that Dr. Buchanan, an early worker in the field of Hunter's inquiries, had accumulated a mass of materials for a statistical account of India. These were supposed to have been sent out to Calcutta, but a diligent search had failed to unearth them in the archives there. After four days' delving in the India office library, Hunter lighted on the results of Dr. Buchanan's labours, filling forty-nine folio volumes.<sup>1</sup> This piece of good fortune braced him up for another attempt, which offered graver difficulties. The Hunterian spelling of proper names raised a storm of dissent among supporters of the phonetic, or "Sir Roger Dowler" method. The authorities of the North-Western Provinces and the East Indian Railway stood firmly on ancient ways, and the Punjab Government was

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 23rd May 1872.



almost alone in its support of a system which combined scholarly accuracy with concession to established usage. Hunter fought the battle of common sense with his accustomed persistence. He had prepared while in India a pamphlet, which he called his "blue book," containing 2187 Indian proper names, transliterated under his simple rules. This he distributed broadcast amongst those who were interested in the discussion. In Sir John Strachey, who filled the office of Viceroy during the few weeks which followed Lord Mayo's assassination,<sup>1</sup> he had a staunch supporter, and a despatch was sent home to the Secretary of State, which frankly adopted the Hunterian system.<sup>2</sup> But the opposition of the India Council had yet to be reckoned with. Hunter appeared in person before that august body, and pleaded his cause so convincingly that his opponents were nonplussed. Touching this triumph he wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*May 29, 1872.*

Yesterday the fight came off in Council. Sir Frederick Halliday opened like a lion on the strength of a theory on Indian spelling broached by him thirty-five years ago, but he went out like a lamb! The whole speaking on my side had to be done by me, with an occasional word of support from Sir Henry Maine and Sir Erskine Perry. However, we all parted in good humour, and I think Sir Frederick shows signs of yielding. He wants me to come round to his room and have it out with him privately.

The first hint of the decision of the Secretary of State was given by Sir Erskine Perry:—

*July 7, 1872.*

Whilst Halliday was speaking in Council, I suggested to the Duke that, according to the "natural or established method," his own name might have five spellings, all equally correct, viz., Argyll, Argyle, Argile, Argail, and Argeil. He seemed struck by this, and remarked that the historical spelling of his title was Ergyle, or Ergail.

In the end reason prevailed over prejudice. The Secretary of State and the great majority of his councillors gave an unqualified support to the Hunterian system in a despatch

<sup>1</sup> He had been made K.C.S.I. on 24th May 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch No. 5 (Statistics), dated 8th March 1872.



to the Government of India.<sup>1</sup> In the intervals of this battle royal Hunter thoroughly enjoyed his ever rising fame. "Orissa" was issued to the public on 17th May and the trade subscribed for 400 copies on that date. The sale during the week exceeded 600.<sup>2</sup> Its author became a literary lion, and his diary gives a long catalogue of the dinner parties to which he was asked. Amongst them was one given by a shipowner at whose table Thackeray had been a frequent guest.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

June 6, 1872.

He lives in a great house at Princes' Gate and does everything in the palatial style. Last night there was a Cabinet Minister to take Mrs.—down to a regular banquet, with all that could display wealth. I sat between Mrs. Grant-Duff, who is *spirituelle* and in every way delightful, and Mrs. Fitzjames Stephen, and was very happy. But the very greatest people do not give these costly and rather ostentatious entertainments. I don't much care for the form of the British merchant-prince.

On 14th June he sought relief from the whirl of the London season in the semi-monastic calm of his much-loved Oxford.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

June 15th.

Yesterday we had a delightful run to Woodstock and Blenheim the scenes of Fair Rosamund's amours, and the gift of the nation to the great Duke of Marlborough. I drove a party out in a mail phaeton, then round the park and home, twenty-two miles in all. I must be in capital health, for though the horses were sometimes troublesome I was not in the least tired. Yesterday we had a charming dinner-party at Balliol, where I am staying with John Purves, and at 10 p.m. we sallied forth into the Fellows' garden and smoked our cigarettes by moonlight. One never meets an undergraduate, or student, as we should call him in Scotland, for this is the Long Vacation. Most of the fellows are one's own age, and now that youth has gone down the authorities have a jolly week before they, too, scatter.

At the end of July he rejoined his wife and children at Lasswade and escorted them to a house which he had rented at Tighnabruaich in the Kyles of Bute, a nook of water surrounded by solemn hills with just a glimpse of the open sea and the

<sup>1</sup> Despatch 12, dated 27th June 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Diary, 24th May 1872.



rugged peaks of Arran.<sup>1</sup> Here for a few weeks he gave himself up to the joys of living. A thoroughbred mare was bought on which her owner had many a breathless gallop on the hills. A piano came from Collards to brighten the long evenings, and a fifteen-ton yacht, the "Cinderella," was hired for daily trips in the narrow seas. The house was soon filled to overflowing with his family and friends. Amongst the latter was Mr. A. D. Lancaster, who thus describes the humours of life at Tighnabruaich:—

November 25, 1899.

Early in August we invaded the Hunters. I write "invaded" because we were in strong force, a party of five. But we were not, after all, an overwhelming factor in the household, for it included old Mrs. Murray, my host's parents, and his two young nieces. He was in rollicking spirits, and we were a very noisy band. But when it came to mediæval tournaments in which the Hunters formed a charger with their arms locked to give a seat to his mother, while I and my wife made up the other and were bestridden by Mrs. Murray, the fun grew too fast and furious for Hunter *père*. I remember him saying to me very seriously one night that he failed to understand how his son should be so childish. "My dear Sir," I replied, "he is merely throwing into his play the energy which enables him to do such splendid work." But he shook his head, and it was evident that he thought Hunter and myself a pair of fools. Neither of his parents understood that side of Hunter's character. They belonged to a generation which took grave and practical views of life, though the mother was evidently a woman of great brain power. The "Cinderella" was rather a crazy little craft with an awkward habit of not always obeying her helm. It was a marvel that we did not come to serious grief. On the afternoon of our arrival we started for a run down the Kyles towards Arran. After sailing for a couple of hours while Hunter steered, we felt a sudden shock, the yacht heeled over and every face grew ghastly pale. There we were, hard and fast on a sunken rock in mid-channel. Luckily there were some fishing boats close at hand. Hunter chartered one of these, put two extra hands into the yacht, and did everything possible to prevent her from bumping when the tide rose by fixing hawsers to the reef. Then we had a delightful cruise in the smack, just as if nothing had happened, and the "Cinderella" floated at midnight. I have been in tighter places than that with Hunter, and I never knew a man with whom I would have preferred to stand shoulder by shoulder in a difficulty. His nerves were good and they had a useful way of becoming like highly wrought steel.

<sup>1</sup> Diary, 22nd July 1872.



The diary proves that an immense amount of useful work was got through at Tighnabruaich in spite of these outbursts of a joyous nature. It was indeed a mystery to Hunter's friends that he should contrive to cope with the self-imposed tasks which followed him everywhere and yet have as much time for their society as any one of the classes who toil not neither do they spin. His secret was an observance of the motto "*Aurora musis amica.*" He was never an early riser, but the hours between breakfast and lunch were sacred to literature in spite of the weekly attacks of neuralgia and the din of a crowded household. During this holiday he sketched the ground plan of his "*Life of the Earl of Mayo,*" which appeared in 1876, and obtained the active help of his hero's family and colleagues. Referring to his diary I find :—

*August 25.*—To-day I opened the first box containing Lord Mayo's letters and minutes, and fairly broke down. That great active brain is silent now. Where is it?

*September 14.*—A long morning with poor Lord Mayo's papers. Fitzjames Stephen forwards an account of his great legislative reforms. Sir John Strachey will write me a memorandum of his executive measures. Lady Mayo and Robert Bourke<sup>1</sup> will help in family and political affairs, and Charles Bourke will give the history of the Irish Secretary's life.

After lunch I had a long ride to Loch Fyne, where I dismounted at the brink of a precipice and let the mare graze out of harm's way while I basked in the glorious sunshine, reading "*Wilhelm Meister.*"

These halcyon days were drawing to a close. Hunter had obtained an extension of his special leave for three months to enable him to study the Buchanan MSS.<sup>2</sup> But this respite would come to an end in mid-December, and very much remained to do. The family bade a regretful farewell to Tighnabruaich on September 26, and while Mrs. Hunter remained at Lasswade, her husband pushed southwards in order to resume his labours at the India

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Robert Bourke was then member for King's Lynn and Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He afterwards became Governor of Madras and was raised to the peerage as Lord Connemara. Hon. Charles Fowler Bourke, C.B. had been his brother's private secretary during Lord Mayo's term of office as Chief Secretary for Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Hunter to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated July 10, 1872 and reply of 29th *id.*



Office. A question now arose as to whether he should return to England in 1873 to deal with the bulky materials which he had discovered, or they should be sent after him to India. The latter course was eventually adopted by the Duke of Argyll, who also sanctioned the publication of a selection of the Calcutta revenue records, which Hunter had begun in 1864.<sup>1</sup>

On 20th October he paid the widowed Countess of Mayo a visit at her residence, Castle Goring, near Eastbourne, and obtained from her those details of her husband's private life which are the salt of every good biography. Thence he went to Alderley Grange for a few days' intercourse with his close friend Mr. Brian Hodgson.

*Diary, October 24, 1872.*—Enjoying rides with Hodgson and the new mistress of this beautiful house through the rich autumn woods and wind-swept Cotswold hills. It is a curious *ménage*—the fine old diplomatist with his white moustaches, his young wife, half philosophic and half religious, and the High Tory old maid, Miss R—.

Leaving this cultured home, he joined Mrs. Hunter and the three children at Edinburgh, and accompanied them to Hawick, where the Wilson clan mustered strongly to do honour to their brilliant kinsman. On 6th November the Hunters, with many heart-searchings, left their first-born in Mrs. Murray's charge and set their faces India-wards. Four days later they embarked at Marseilles in the Messageries steamer *Ava*. The voyage to Calcutta was unusually full of incidents, some of which are described in a letter to his uncle:—

TO MR. GEORGE WILSON.

*November 15, 1872.*

This is a little floating town, and, in spite of a heavy swell in the Gulf of Lyons, none of us had an hour's sea-sickness. The passengers are a motley crew—Spaniards returning to Manilla, Dutchmen bound for Batavia, with a very few French and English. Each race forms a little colony, whose frontier lines are settled by tacit international treaty. At the captain's table sit a French admiral, going out as Governor of Saigon, his aide-de-camp, Jessie, and myself. The next table is crowded with Spaniards, the third

<sup>1</sup> *Diary, October 20, 1872.* He was paid an advance of £660 by Government to cover the cost of printing four volumes.



with Japanese, who have had eighteen months of English civilisation and learnt the use of soap and water. Finally, there is a noisy horde of Dutch folk, the women sallow, the men with skins of a greyish hue. We are also very strong in clergymen of sorts. They are headed by an Italian bishop with his chaplain and six young priests attending him *in partes infidelium*. The first two have invented a system of mutual indulgences from all spiritual functions. They lie in bed all day smoking episcopal cigarettes and reading French novels. The six poor friars the while pace the corridor outside their cabin repeating paternosters and aves in an undertone, that the spiritual fathers may not be disturbed in their enjoyment of Balzac and George Sand.

The diary gives some further particulars of the voyage :—

16th November.—The chaplain now and then darts out to shake his finger at the young zealots and mutter, "Do not disturb his lordship at his devotions!"

17th November.—Entered the Suez Canal for the first time. Much remains to be done on Lesseps' part, for we grounded heavily and damaged our screw.

21st November.—We have been three days in dock at Suez while a new blade was being fitted. Had a long talk with a Lutheran clergyman about the Old Testament prophecies as evidence of Christ's divinity. He lays great stress on them: I cannot. Asked him to give me a list of those on which he rests his case, and will examine them one by one myself.

29th November.—In the Indian Ocean. The north-east monsoon has set in with high seas. Had to give up my daily articles for the *Englishman*, as they involve too great a strain in this heat and constant rolling. Reading Lecky's "History of Rationalism" and Bishop Colenso's "Natal Sermons," making notes on the machinery for missionary propaganda which Christianity once possessed, but has abandoned, thanks to the rationalism of the present day.

On 26th December the *Ava* was nearly wrecked at the entrance of Galle Harbour, a dangerous anchorage, which has long been abandoned for Colombo. Her tiller-ropes gave way, and the great ship drifted towards the jagged rocks. But the captain kept his presence of mind. He backed out of the narrow channel and anticipated the invention of steam steering-gear by connecting his rudder with the donkey-engines. A week later the *Ava* ended her chequered voyage at Calcutta, and the Hunters found roomy quarters on the first floor of 11 Middleton Street. Calcutta crowds into three months of



relatively cool weather as many events as are spread over nine in a European capital. Hunter's diary during the spring of 1873 reveals a constant struggle between the claims of duty and social intercourse. He found awaiting him an immense volume of raw material for the Statistical Account of Bengal, and it was necessary to incorporate this with the figures given by the first census taken in 1871. The preparation of a doomsday-book for his own province, which should serve as a model for all other Gazetteers, could be entrusted to no hands but his own. Invitations to balls and dinner-parties were, therefore, declined, and the Hunters became known as "hermetically sealed." A sharp attack of bronchitis cut short the unwelcome sojourn in Calcutta. The doctor ordered him at once to Simla, and on 12th March he started thither with his family and the *personnel* of the office of Director-General of Statistics. The journey occupied eleven days, for transit arrangements thirty years ago did not admit of haste where young children were concerned, and the *impedimenta*, filling 125 boxes, were carried uphill from Ambala in crawling bullock waggons. These long delays were beguiled by the study of Herodotus. Hunter always kept in view the History of European intercourse with India, which was to be the crown of his career as a man of letters, and he resolved to read the old Greek authors with care, in order to discover what use had been made of their facts and theories by Grote. The end of March arrived ere he was settled at Newlands, his mountain home. Here he adopted a routine of living which was calculated to combine a maximum output of solid work with the indispensable amount of fresh air and relaxation. The former was secured by daily gallops round the villa-dotted hills, and the second by fiction and poetry devoured in the intervals of leisure given by the rest of Simla to cards and badminton. Sunday brought a respite to the busy pen. On 30th March, for instance, Hunter read Thucydides after church, then rode for three hours and lay among the flowering rhododendrons on the hill-side reading "King John."<sup>1</sup> When the day of rest came round again, Milton's "Comus" was the companion of his

<sup>1</sup> Diary, 30th March 1873.



solitary ride. Thus he saturated his mind with the thought and melody of the giants of our literature, and counteracted the soul-depressing influence of eternal figures. The claims of journalism were not neglected. He added to the responsibility entailed by his connection with the *Englishman* by undertaking, the duty of representing India in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The negotiations which gave that paper an honest and eloquent contributor are related in a remarkable correspondence with Sir James Stephen, who served as an intermediary with the editor, Mr. Frederick Greenwood:—

TO SIR JAMES STEPHEN.

April 3, 1873.

You know my relations with Government and the Indian Press. A ruler with no parliamentary or talking apparatus at his disposal requires some machinery for correcting misstatements and presenting the true facts of the case to the public. In serving such ends, I am doing work which is not derogatory and which belongs, almost of right, to my office of Compiler of the Statistics of India. I have discharged these functions since Lord Lawrence's last year of office, and throughout Lord Mayo's reign; and, on returning to India, three months ago, I was asked to resume them by Lord Northbrook. I should very much like to write for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and prize the influence which the connection would give. But it must be an honest influence, like George Smith's in *The Times*. I could make the current history of India, with all the colouring of native existence and the curious scenery on the road between Asiatic still life and our European standards of civilisation, pass as a panorama before the English public. . . . You know my confession of faith. I disbelieve in direct taxation, except for the richer classes who dwell in cities. I believe the differential duties on salt, and the vast internal custom lines which we still maintain, to be a serious hindrance to trade, and a baneful relic of native misrule. I believe that jails should be places of discipline, and not almshouses for the criminal classes. I believe that the army administration is not in accord with the increased facilities of communication and transport, and that three Commanders-in-Chief, with as many separate head-quarters, are a wasteful anachronism. I disbelieve in calling a thin veneer of English culture for the upper classes a system of public instruction, and I think that Sir George Campbell is doing a great and long-needed work by educating the common people. I believe that, with the steady decline in the purchasing power of silver, the land revenue in temporarily settled provinces should be fixed in grain. I believe that, with our great body of half-trained judges, the law should be



simplified by codification, and that, by legislative revisions at short recurring periods, all precedents of acknowledged value should be incorporated with the present code. Among men, I believe that Lord Mayo was, on the whole, the strongest and ablest Viceroy since India passed to the Crown;—to be a man selfishly religious but worldly-wise, and likely to succeed except at a great crisis; and Sir John Strachey to be the ablest Indian public servant of our times—one who only needs a crisis to issue from it as Governor-General. I think Lord Northbrook a most laborious worker, with a good, firm will of his own. For years I have fought for these principles of government, and even in my short career I have seen many of them triumph. If the *Pall Mall* will have me on these terms I will do my best for it; but they are the principles of my life and I cannot depart from them.

Sir James Stephen was evidently impressed by the candour and moral courage of his ally. He accepted the mission and induced Mr. Greenwood to receive Hunter as his Indian representative. Confidence inspires confidence. The great lawyer's reply concludes with a confession of religious belief, expressed more frankly than is the wont of highly intellectual men.

FROM SIR JAMES STEPHEN.

April 30, 1873.

As to my theological opinions, I should have thought that they were as plainly intimated in the last chapter of my book as was necessary.<sup>1</sup> However, if you care to know more explicitly what I think, it is just this. I do not believe the New Testament narrative to be true. To my mind, the whole history of Christ, in so far as it is supernatural, is legendary. As to Christian morals, I cannot regard them as either final or complete. As to natural religion, I think its two great doctrines—God and a future state—more probable than not; and they appear to me to make all the difference to morality. Take them away and epicureanism seems to me the true and proper doctrine. This will hardly be news to any one who has read what I have written with discernment. I send you a copy of the book by this mail, and hope that here and there a few people will read it in India. I should like to see any reviews that you may meet with in the papers. I do not know that it will do much good in this country; I rather think not, as I find I am more successful in articles than books. My own feeling about the doctrines of my book, and, indeed, about all such speculations, is that there will ultimately come a revolution, the nature of which no one can pretend to estimate. I do not feel in the least degree

<sup>1</sup> "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" appeared on 13th April 1873, and a second edition in 1874.



enthusiastic about it. It will sweep away much that appears to be good and noble, and I do not think it will put anything better in its place. But I have a deeply-rooted conviction, which goes below every other belief, that, in the long run, truth is of all expedient things the most expedient. Indeed, this is about the only article of faith which it is, to me, practically impossible to doubt. I should be more or less puzzled if I were called upon to prove the truth of that opinion.

Hunter's chief work during 1873 was to put the raw material accumulated for the Statistical Account of Bengal into a lucid and readable shape; but as Director-General of Statistics he was called on to supervise the Gazetteers which were being simultaneously prepared in every province. This duty was, perhaps, the most onerous which had devolved upon him. From some Governments he received support and practical sympathy, but even in these instances his guiding hand was needed at every turn. Hardly was he settled in Simla than he had to leave his bed during one of the recurring neuralgic attacks to read the Panjab MS. through with the editor. As a specimen of the obstructive genus of administration we have Sir George Couper, Bart., the Chief Commissioner of Oudh. He hated statistics,<sup>1</sup> and when he discovered that the editor of his Gazetteer would be under the orders of Hunter as Director-General, he ceased to interest himself in its progress. This Gallio-like attitude did not prevent Sir George from raising his voice in protest against certain views of Indian polity expressed by the local editor. The latter was, therefore, summoned to Simla to confer with Hunter, who gave up half his working day for an entire month to reading over with him every page of the completed portion. By dint of infinite patience Hunter succeeded in inducing his Oudh lieutenant to tone down the eccentricities of thought and language to which exception had been taken. Of the tact with which he performed an extremely disagreeable task I need give but two instances. The annexation of Oudh was then comparatively recent history. The scars left by the Mutiny were unhealed, and many great questions connected with the land administration were still in a fluid state. The editor was a man of

<sup>1</sup> Office note by Mr. A. O. Hume, Secretary to the Government of India, dated 23rd October 1873.



extreme views, with a bias towards the ryot which did great credit to his heart. He had represented the agricultural and labouring classes throughout the province as far worse off under our *régime* than during the reign of the dynasty dispossessed by Lord Dalhousie. In eliminating this portion of the draft Gazetteer, Hunter wrote:—

The miseries caused by over-population may be great, but the cautery which kept it down under native rule was infinitely more terrible. If we are to credit Sleeman's "Oudh,"<sup>1</sup> the sufferings now endured by the people are mere surface bruises after a series of ghastly amputations.<sup>2</sup>

As a reason for deleting the editor's references to the Mutiny and the share taken therein by certain leading families, Hunter remarked:—

Nothing can more strongly tend to perpetuate the hostility of chiefs to our rule than publicly reminding the sons of their father's misdeeds.

In the end a *modus vivendi* was established. The Oudh Gazetteer was purged of all offences against taste and political expediency, and became a monument of severe statistical research. The energy brought to bear on these multifarious duties won high praise from the Secretary to whom he was directly subordinate. Mr. A. O. Hume wrote officially:—

October 23.

He has been in constant correspondence with all the local compilers, and has so arranged matters that the work will be done everywhere on the same principles, and will contain all that is requisite for a final Imperial Gazetteer. The crux was to get Bengal, where neither machinery nor materials existed, set going and kept going, and this Hunter has done. His amazing industry and the tact and good temper which he has displayed in dealing with the local Governmeats, with all of whom, except Oudh, he has kept on the best of terms, cannot be too strongly commended.

Among other products of this most fruitful epoch must be reckoned the first two volumes of Selections for the Bengal Revenue Records, which the Secretary of State had sanctioned

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh in 1849-50," London, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Printed notes by Hunter on the Oudh Gazetteer, dated 16th May and 3rd September 1873.



in 1872, and the preparation of a scheme for lessening the amount of Government printing, which led to a reduction of 20,000 volumes in the outturn of the various presses.<sup>1</sup> With avocations which would have severely taxed the resources of several ordinary men, Hunter spared neither time nor brain in the service of his fellow-workers. He rendered Dr. Francis Day essential help in the preparation of "The Fish and Fisheries of the Fresh Waters of India," and the author gratefully acknowledged his obligations.<sup>2</sup> In June 1873, a specially busy period, Mr. R. B. Shaw, the Himalayan explorer, came to Simla on his journey to Leh. Hunter not only procured for him all the published books relating to the country north of the Karakorum range, but prepared a vocabulary and list of Sanskrit roots to serve as a basis for Shaw's studies in the dialects of Eastern Turkestan.<sup>3</sup>

In October the even tenour of his way was interrupted by the first threatenings of the scarcity which affected Behar during 1874. On the 24th of that month Lord Northbrook received a telegram from Calcutta announcing a serious failure of the winter rice crop over a large area, and his Private Secretary, Captain Evelyn Baring,<sup>4</sup> asked Hunter for his opinion on the outlook. It was given in twenty-four hours in a confidential letter which lays down the fundamental branches of a famine policy. Chief amongst them Hunter placed—

*October 26, 1873.*

I. Publicity, and facing the facts. Sir George Campbell will doubtless keep an eye on the press, but he should be encouraged

<sup>1</sup> This great question has, after nearly twenty-nine years of incubation been adequately dealt with by Lord Curzon in a masterly minute dated 25th February 1901. His Excellency therein refers to the orders of the Secretary of State, which were based on Hunter's scheme.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Francis Day (1830-79) wrote to Hunter on 15th November 1871: "I am largely indebted to you for the great amount of trouble you have taken in reducing my hurriedly written MS. to shape and form."

<sup>3</sup> Mr. R. B. Shaw was a Kumaon tea-planter with a taste for philology and travel. After exploring the Karakorum mountains, and forming a friendship with Yakub Beg, a Mahammadan adventurer who carved out for himself a principality in Chinese Turkestan, he was appointed our Joint Commissioner at Ladak. He became our Resident at Mandalay in 1878, and boldly protested against the insane tyranny of King Thebaw. He died the following year. Mr. Shaw published sketches of the Turki and Gulchah languages in 1875 and 1876.

<sup>4</sup> Now the Earl of Cromer, G.C.S.I., &c.



to inquire into every statement of fact bearing on the famine that may appear in English or native journals. Indian newspaper rumours are like the pomegranate seeds in the Second Calenderer's story—a hundred of them may be disposed of without practical result, while any single one may, if neglected in a time of public calamity, turn into a consuming monster. The Orissa Famine of 1866 assumed two phases—a period of denial and a period of panic, and the men who spoke out before Government was willing to hear were nearly ruined. . . . Care should be taken to give no grounds for associating a judicious forecast by our District Officers with the frowns of the Board of Revenue.

II. Early and authentic information regarding each district and what may be called its normal liability to famine. One great object of my Statistical Account of Bengal was to construct a system of famine warnings.

Hunter proceeded to discuss remedial measures, laying down the principles which should govern remission of taxation on land in time of famine, and the mechanism for relief of sufferers. He concluded with a few words on the attitude of the Supreme Government :—

The stronger class of officials will do the right thing under any discouragement, and it may seem to some people that the presence of a Viceroy can matter little. But it should never be forgotten that, with the average officials, especially in the subordinate ranks, and the native gentry as a body, the attitude which the head of Government takes up will be the attitude which they adopt. The example of facing the facts will penetrate to every police station and landlord's office in Bengal.

Lord Northbrook was of the same opinion, and resolved on an immediate journey to Calcutta in order to confer with Sir George Campbell on the means of meeting the crisis. On 12th November Hunter received an intimation of the Viceroy's high approval of his letter, and a request for detailed information as to the liability of each Bengal district to famine.<sup>1</sup> This request produced one of those gigantic efforts of which Hunter alone was capable. The story is told from day to day in the diary :—

*13th November.*—Began my book "Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts" for the Viceroy. Working from 7 A.M. to 11 at night with my wife and whole staff on my book.

*24th to 26th November.*—Got leave from the Viceroy by telegram

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 12th November.



to print at a private office here. This week I finished and revised 166 pages. The printers are visibly breaking down under the night-work. Rode twice a day. The excitement has stopped my usual attack of neuralgia, but it also keeps me in a state of nervous irritation, which is worse.

*27th November to 2nd December.*—I write faster than the printers can set up the type, and the correcting of proofs gives me more trouble than the composition. I ride twelve miles a day round Jakko and Summer Hill with fresh horses, and manage to keep myself going only by constant exercise and fresh air. Simla is perfectly glorious. Bright sunshine all day and ice every night. The snow line is quite near, and the cedar and rhododendron woods sparkle in every leaf. The ilex or prickly oak is a mass of holly berries. On Monday, 1st December, the Simla Press people were utterly exhausted by over-work, but Colonel Wright, Deputy-Adjutant-General, has placed his whole printing establishment at my disposal.

*8th December.*—All day and every day at the Adjutant-General's and the Simla presses, hurrying on the last sheets of my book. The printers are blind with night-work, and send up revises more full of errors than the first proofs. The volume makes 224 pages of text and thirty-eight of prefatory matter—total, 261 pages. Finished printing on 4th December; then a delay for hot-pressing, and bound copies were received on Saturday, 6th. Sent off copies at once to the Viceroy and Sir George Campbell. Wrote an article for the *Englishman*, and corrected sixty-four pages of volume ii. "Bengal Records." In the afternoon gave a children's party.

This addition to the scanty literature of famine relief was despatched on the same day to the Viceroy's Private Secretary and to Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In his letter to the former its author wrote:—

TO CAPTAIN EVELYN BARING.

*December 6.*

If any extra man be needed for famine work, more especially in its statistical aspects, I would esteem myself happy to serve as a volunteer—of course without any further pay than that of my Director-Generalship of Statistics, and without any charge on the Bengal revenues. Heaven forbid that any civilian should derive profit from the public distress!

The volume was gratefully acknowledged by both recipients, and its author received the public thanks of the Indian Government in a resolution which appeared in the official



Gazette.<sup>1</sup> His offer of assistance in organising the famine campaign was, however, declined, on the score that it would interfere with the important duties for which Hunter was already responsible.<sup>2</sup>

"Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts"<sup>3</sup> is a compact volume of 200 pages, bristling with facts and figures, marshalled with a skill and accuracy which seems amazing in a work written in three weeks. In the introductory pages the writer modestly recounted his own experience during the Orissa Famine of 1866. That calamity was due to the neglect of the warning afforded by the sudden rise in the price of food-grain after the great winter harvest of 1865-66 had been garnered. Had the writing on the wall been taken to heart by the Bengal Government it might have been possible to pour grain into the famine-stricken area before its ports were closed by the monsoon, and so save a large proportion of the three-quarters of a million who perished from hunger. The lesson was not lost on the young official. His first step on being appointed to superintend the compilation of the Statistical Account of Bengal was to put a series of questions to the district officers relating to the significance of prices and the ability of the people to tide over crop failures. Their replies enabled him to give in "Famine Aspects" a comprehensive view of the resources of forty districts, inhabited by 50,000,000 souls, and including those in Behar and Western Bengal which were giving Government the most poignant anxiety. His conclusions were entirely novel, but had great practical value. He held that the market rates for coarse rice which prevailed immediately after the main winter harvest, afforded a famine barometer. An increase of 100 per cent. over normal prices should be taken as presaging scarcity; and if the rise is as much as 300 per cent., making the average price five farthings per pound, the necessity of relief measures was *ipso facto* established. Of the ability of our Indian population to resist famine

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hunter from Sir George Campbell, dated 10th December 1873, and Resolution of the Government of India, dated 14th January 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Captain Evelyn Baring to Hunter, dated 16th December 1873.

<sup>3</sup> "Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts," by W. W. Hunter, B.A., LL.D., Director-General of Statistics with the Government of India. London: Trübner & Co., 1874. A Second Edition appeared in 1877, the year of the Madras Famine.



he wrote in terms which brought down on him much unmerited abuse from a public prone to act hysterically on very imperfect knowledge.

At the outset of a famine, the children and weaker members of the family die, and those who survive eke out a very insufficient quantity of rice by roots and wild plants. The wages, which would not suffice to feed an average family of four, are sufficient for the two or three who survive. The rural population enters a famine as a frigate goes into action, cleared of useless gear and inefficient members.

This was stating in forcible and picturesque language, not an ideal basis of famine policy, but a fact which could not be impeached. Under native rule such visitations were borne submissively as tokens of divine displeasure, and no British Government had dreamt of saving human life regardless of cost. What form, he asked, should effectual relief assume? Native public opinion was unanimous in urging that exports of food grain should be prohibited during a period of famine pressure. Europeans urged that it behoved the State to restore the balance between supply and demand by importing grain from countries blessed with a surplus. Hunter wisely refrained from delivering judgment on so knotty a point, contenting himself with pointing out that, regarded by European standards, the margin between abundance and actual scarcity in India was absurdly small. A rise of a halfpenny per pound in the price of rice meant little to the British importer, but to the Indian consumer it spelled famine. The author's views on relief were based on the principle of self-help. Remunerative public works must, he thought, be started as soon as market prices foretold famine with no uncertain voice. But a residuum would be encountered unable to earn a living wage, and for them food must be found by the State. Reasoning on the sad experiences in Orissa, he estimated that 2.75 per cent. of the population would require charitable relief. The Viceroy, in a speech delivered at Agra on 24th November 1873, had declared that 24,000,000 were threatened with famine. On this basis, 660,000 must be fed for six months, and assuming that one pound of grain per diem would keep body and soul together, the cost would be £396,000, or, at the utmost, half a million sterling.



The Indian exchequer would have been the richer by many millions had the foresight and economy inculcated in "Famine Aspects" marked the vast operations for combating scarcity undertaken by the Bengal Government in 1874. But though the net result of the first attempt to formulate the principles of famine policy was not so great as it deserved, the influence of this most timely work was immediate and far-reaching. It may be traced in every measure taken by our Government during the ensuing year, and in the code which has been suggested on a quarter of a century's experience. In this all-important branch of an Indian statesman's duty Hunter played the thankless part of a pioneer, and he saw without a murmur great reputations built on his strenuous labours.



## CHAPTER XIII

### A LABOUR OF LOVE

THE news which reached England in October that nearly half the population of our greatest Indian province stood in dire peril of famine stirred the public mind to its very depths. The memories of the Orissa fiasco were still recent, and men felt that a repetition of the horrors brought about by procrastination and incompetence would lead to an impeachment of our rule by the entire civilised world. The feeling found energetic expression in Parliament and the press, and the Secretary of State echoed the unmistakable voice of public opinion when he told the Viceroy that "Her Majesty's Government relied on his shrinking from no available means, at whatever cost, to prevent, as far as he could, any loss of the lives of her subjects in consequence of a calamity which threatened Bengal."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Northbrook rose to the occasion. He placed his Finance Minister, Sir Richard Temple, in charge of relief operations in the threatened tract, which included the western districts of Bengal, still known under their ancient title of Behar. In concert with his trusted lieutenant he took more than adequate measures for feeding a population of 2,500,000 during seven months.

A question now arose as momentous as any which an Indian statesman has faced. Experience had shown that famine never seriously interfered with a vast export trade in food grains to Europe and our colonies which employed Indian coolie labour. In spite of the growth of railways and steam navigation, it was doubtful whether private enterprise would suffice to replenish stocks depleted alike by this movement and the failure of the harvests. Sir George Campbell strongly urged that the exportation of grain should be prohibited during the period of

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of 1st December 1873.



scarcity,<sup>1</sup> but Lord Northbrook vetoed the demand, backed though it was by public opinion. His reasons for taking a step which involved the assumption of so grave a responsibility were most ably stated in a despatch to the Secretary of State:<sup>2</sup>—

One of the greatest safeguards in times of famine is the shrinkage in consumption resulting from the rise in price which follows a bad harvest, and any addition to the stocks of grain produced by interference with exportation is soon absorbed by the increased demand flowing from an artificial cheapness. And even if this advantage be not secured by allowing commerce to flow in its usual channels, any temporary benefit which might result from blocking them would be dearly purchased. The export trade in grain is of vital necessity to a poor country which must rely on itself for supplies of food. Its existence ensures the production in ordinary years of more rice than is required to meet the demands of the people. The increase in price which occurs in times of stress must divert a part of the ordinary exports to home consumption, and thus a reserve of grain is formed almost automatically. The inevitable inference is that a sudden check to this export trade must weaken the power of the country to meet future famines. Again, nothing is easier than to divert the stream of commerce from one channel to another, and to do so is often fatal. If we refuse to supply our ordinary customers at any price, we compel them to have recourse to other markets, and we cannot assume that they will return to us when we are in a condition to meet their demands. Lord Northbrook therefore resolved to supply the anticipated deficiency by bringing 342,000 tons of rice from beyond the seas, an amount nearly equal to the average annual export from Bengal.

This state paper is of high and permanent value, and it is not a little strange to find the old economic fallacy so ruthlessly demolished, cropping up after a quarter of a century's famine experience.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Government of Bengal to that of India, dated 22nd October 1873.

<sup>2</sup> Despatch No. 8, dated 30th January 1874.

<sup>3</sup> No longer ago than 28th February 1901 an ex-Consulting Engineer to Government for Indian State Railways advocated the imposition of a special duty on exported grain when famine threatens (Proceedings of the Society of Arts, London, for 15th March 1901).



"Famine Aspects" was published in London early in January 1874, while the ferment produced by the Bengal Famine was at its height. Like the "Indian Musalmans" it was eminently opportune, and created a deep impression. *The Times* was at first hostile. In a lengthy notice, the leading journal fastened on the bold simile employed by Hunter to point his moral that an Oriental population is able to sustain severe famine pressure. The critic wrote:—

This does not mean that Government help is not to be given until the children and weaker members have been cleared away. We entirely exculpate Dr. Hunter from any such meaning. His whole book and the labour of his life are a reply to any charge made or implied against him of disregard of human life. He means that, before the famine price of rice has been reached, the very old and the very young must die.

The conclusion arrived at was that he had placed the "famine rate" too high, and that relief measures should be taken when the price of coarse grain touched a penny per lb.<sup>1</sup> *The Times* afterwards took a more favourable view of the elaborate calculations of "Famine Aspects," and the general tone of the majority of English newspapers was most laudatory.<sup>2</sup> It was but natural that the true bearings of so complex a problem should have been missed by the home-staying journalist. They are stated more clearly by Mr. A. C. Lyall, who, in acknowledging a donation from Hunter to the Famine Fund, wrote:—

From MR. A. C. LYALL.

March 2, 1874.

Herewith the receipt for your subscription, which I think is ample. I myself am much disturbed, not about the famine, but about the social and economical consequence of indiscriminate relief in India; and relief by the State must be very indiscriminate. Here is Fawcett<sup>3</sup> threatening to impeach the Government if any one dies; and he will be less cautious out of Parliament than

<sup>1</sup> *The Times* of 19th January 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter wrote a few months later to his wife: "Do you see how *The Times* is coming round to my view? Last week it took a passage from my famine book as a text for a leading article, and spoke quite respectfully of the author" (Letter of 21st June 1874).

<sup>3</sup> Professor Henry Fawcett (1833-1884) forced his way into Parliament, though "poor, blind, and unknown." He was popularly spoken of as "the Member for India," and was perhaps the best Postmaster-General we have ever had.



inside the House. But to say that a Government is responsible for the lives of all its subjects is pure Fourierism. We must now set up phalansteries and *ateliers nationaux*, or we must be placed in charge of the population department at both ends. Can't you suggest this anti-philanthropic view to the *Pall Mall*? But you have been already so heavily abused for the one sentence of hard fact that you stuck into your "Famine Aspects!" That was because you used a trope.

In the meantime events were occurring of some importance in Hunter's personal history. He foresaw that the superintendence of the provincial Gazetteers would involve prolonged absence from headquarters, and thought it best that Mrs. Hunter should settle down in Edinburgh and leave him free to undertake those extensive tours which enabled him to keep the mechanism in working order. On 11th December 1873 he escorted his family from Simla to Bombay, and ten days later bade them farewell on board the steamer *Bokhara*, bound for Southampton. His next fortnight was spent in laying a solid foundation for the Gazetteer of the Western Presidency. Mr. Chapman, Chief Secretary to the local Government, suggested that, before deciding on any line of action, Hunter should study in the interim the rather peculiar revenue administration of Bombay.<sup>1</sup> He eagerly embraced the opportunity of adding to his stock of knowledge, and began a tour of inquiry in Western and Southern India. Its first stage was Surat, an ancient seat of British commerce, about 150 miles from the capital. The diary records his reception by the District Collector, Mr. Theodore Hope,<sup>2</sup> and the chief incidents of a journey which lasted for two months and covered 2100 miles.

15th January.—Went out with my hosts to their camp, and had a great day doing Jama'bandhi.<sup>3</sup> The ryots of a great number of villages came to our tents, each village with its headman and accountant, to have their books examined, and to make sure that they were not being cheated. Saw patriarchal justice done at the tent door.

16th January.—Another busy day at Jama'bandhi. Saw every stage of the process in detail; disputed cases heard by the Col-

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated 23rd February 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Theodore Hope, K.C.S.I.

<sup>3</sup> The settlement of the rent payable by tillers of the soil, or "ryots," to the Government, which is in theory the universal landlord. In Bombay the indigenous village organisation has not been ruthlessly destroyed, as in Bengal.



lector, the ryots' personal accounts compared with the village day-books, boundaries tested, and blunders and omissions detected by the Collector's karkuns.<sup>1</sup>

*21st January.*—Arrived at the capital of the native State of Bhaunagur, in Kathiawar. Welcomed by Mr. Percival, a civilian who has been appointed to conduct the administration jointly with the native Prime Minister during the Raja's minority. The morning we visited the jail. In the condemned cell was a poor wretch awaiting the confirmation of his death-sentence by the Bombay Government. I shall never forget the painful, startled look he gave me when I appeared. His eyes seemed to search my very soul. Evidently he thought that, being a strange *sahib*,<sup>2</sup> I had come to announce his fate.

*14th February.*—Reached Goa, the capital of Portuguese India, after dusk. Forced to cast anchor off the custom-house, and forbidden to proceed up the river to the modern city, Panjim. Landed and routed out the commandant, when we had a great palaver in bad French. In the end the customs myrmidons were sent into space, and I was sped onward to Panjim in a twelve-oared barge. Put up at a dirty hole which is the only hotel.

*15th February.*—Called on the Portuguese Governor-General of India and was most kindly received. As I had introductory letters from our Government he ought to have offered to entertain me. But his pay is only £1800, and he is old, with an insecure tenure of office. He has a family in Portugal, and is trying to live on £800 a year and sending the rest home. He walked round his picture gallery with me, descanting on the endless bad portraits of Portuguese viceroys since 1503. Afterwards, over his wine, he roundly abused all his colleagues. He has been for two years among them, has had to disband his army at the cannon's mouth, and altogether appears to have had a miserable time of it. The officers of the garrison called on me in the afternoon, all a little tipsy in honour of the carnival, and ran down the Viceroy over my liquor as a shabby old miser. I puffed my cigar in silence and listened appreciatively to all parties. Meanwhile I have managed to do a good stroke of work here; have collected all the requisite materials for the account of the Portuguese Settlements, and so will save Government no end of trouble and expense.

*16th February.*—To-day the Governor sent me up in the twelve-oared barge to Goa proper. It is a city of desolation, with a few churches, some heaps of bricks covered with long grass and innumerable snakes and jackals as the only remains of a great walled capital which held 200,000 inhabitants in the sixteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> A Persian word meaning literally "record-keeper." In Bombay it is the title of native auditors of rent accounts.

<sup>2</sup> A Persian term of respect. It is used throughout India in addressing Europeans as well as Mahammadans of rank.



21st February.—Left dirty, dog-haunted, bug-ridden Goa in a fine patamer,<sup>1</sup> and sailed gaily down the coast to Karwar. Much impressed by the contrast presented by this brand-new port. Here British energy has striven to force a seat of trade into existence in ten years; but unless a railway is given I don't see how it can pay.<sup>2</sup>

From this scene of hopes destined to disappointment he went to Beypur, and took the railway thence to Bangalor, the capital of Maisur. Here, while busying himself with the State Gazetteer, he was laid low by fever, but struggled onward to Madras in order to be near his old friend, Mr. H. S. Cunningham, the local Advocate-General.<sup>3</sup> The tender nursing of the author of the "Chronicles of Dustypore" and his sister soon enabled the patient to start for Calcutta by steamer. He ended his wanderings there on 17th March, and was hospitably received by Mr. A. C. Lyall, agent to the Governor-General of Rajputana. During a ten days' stay he arranged for the publication of vols. iii. and iv. of his "Selected Bengal Records," and obtained a grant for the purpose of £700 from Government. On 28th March he left for Simla, which was to be his headquarters during the hot weather and rains; and on the day of departure he found time to give his wife some news of his sojourn at Calcutta.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

March 27, 1874.

To-night my visit to this pleasant house comes to an end. I have got through a great deal of work prosperously, and enjoyed every moment of my stay with the Lyalls. We have either had dinner parties at home or dined out daily, and have generally finished the night either at Mrs. Lyall's box at the Opera or at some At Home. Mr. Lyall is a terrible Turk at keeping his wife up to her social duties. The other night, after dinner which ended at 9.30, we became very drowsy as we reclined on a great settee in the verandah, but mine host grew wakeful and philo-

<sup>1</sup> A large native sailing-craft.]

<sup>2</sup> Hunter was prophetic here. The projected railway to connect Karwar with the cotton districts was abandoned, and, by the irony of fate, its terminus was placed at Marmagoa, close to Goa, whither most of the disappointed merchants and millowners have migrated.

<sup>3</sup> Now Sir Henry Stewart Cunningham, K.C.I.E., whose delightful sketches of Anglo-Indian life, the "Chronicles of Dustypore," "The Coerulians," &c., are so widely appreciated.



sophical, and the harder I tried to make him smoke himself into quiescence, the more alert he grew. At half-past ten he woke us up, made Mrs. Lyall freshen herself with eau de Cologne, and dragged us off to Mrs. Hobhouse's musical *At Home*. Last night I dined quite quietly at Government House, and had a long talk with Lord Northbrook, who seemed to be saying to himself, "Now I wonder what sort of a fellow Mr. Hunter really is!" In the afternoon we had attended a garden-party at Belvedere. Sir George Campbell leaves India for good next week. He told me that, now that it was inevitable, he felt that he was recovering, and compared himself to a cast cavalry charger who gets rid of his spavin the moment he is drummed out of the regiment.<sup>1</sup>

This house always gives a dinner-party on Fridays, and adjourns to the Opera, the dinner-hour being put back to 7.30 that the overture may not be missed. My train for Simla does not start till 11 P.M., so that I shall have an hour's good music, take a lively farewell of all my friends in their boxes, and drive straight to the station. How I should have enjoyed this journey if you had been with me!

I have had to smash — about his lying letters and telegrams in the —; I did it quietly but pitilessly—a single blow, but one that made him the public scorn of the whole of India, and left the steel quivering in his heart. He goes about with a face perfectly haggard, and ascribes the stroke to Captain Baring's hand! I hope that it will stop his wicked mendacity for a time.

In the meantime Sir Richard Temple had broken the back of the Bengal famine. Money was literally of no account, for Parliament showed its opinion that human life was infinitely more precious by authorising a special loan of £10,000,000. And so the railway stations and roads throughout Behar were gorged with imported rice. Much of it rotted in improvised granaries, but enough was consumed by multitudes nominally employed on relief works to prevent any appreciable mortality. Before the end of March Lord Northbrook banished the anxieties of the British public by telegraphing an assurance that no adult would

<sup>1</sup> It was widely believed at the time that Sir George Campbell's departure at this crisis was due to friction with the Supreme Government, and to his virtual supersession by Sir Richard Temple. Lord Northbrook informs me that this view was incorrect. As early as October 1873 Sir George had signified his wish to retire from India in order to stand for a Scottish burgh. When the famine became acute he was anxious to remain at the helm, but was positively forbidden to do so by Dr. Macnamara, his medical adviser. The Viceroy, therefore, accepted his resignation, and named Sir Richard Temple as his successor. Sir George Campbell's "Memoirs of my Indian Career" (ii. 330) show that he willingly acquiesced in the arrangement, and did not consider himself as having been superseded by Sir Richard Temple.



die of hunger. It has been truly, if somewhat coarsely said, of that many-headed monster that, in warfare, he "dearly loves a heavy butcher's bill." The same frame of mind was seen in the action taken at home in the Bengal Famine of 1874. The millions then flung broadcast would have pauperised any other country for a generation, and that the Behari resumed the habits of his toilsome life when the heyday of wild profusion was past is a proof of the strength of inherited instincts. By the British press the huge expenditure incurred was accepted as evidence of philanthropy and high administrative skill. As in the case of the £20,000,000 voted forty years earlier as compensation to slave-owners for the liberation of their human chattels, John Bull took to himself a share of the credit for rescuing Bengal from the grip of famine, at a cost which appealed to his reverence for money while it did not touch his pocket. A letter received at this time by Hunter from one of Sir George Campbell's colleagues will exhibit the view taken in high places of these early gropings in the field of famine administration.

From MR. —.

*April 5, 1874.*

Campbell and Muir both depart on the 8th, as you know. Two men, essentially Scotchmen but of antipathetic minds, will be succeeded by two Englishmen of the southern counties, but also of very divergent types.<sup>1</sup> Campbell will go home to tell, with some effect, his own story of the famine and, if there had been any failure, he might have been troublesome, but success covers all minor disputes. His point is that the Government of India have not taken him wholly into their plans for relief, and thus produced some confusion. I was much impressed, while talking to Temple lately, with the complete indifference which he showed as to the minor politics of the famine business, and the friction between Governments. All he said was that he did not trouble his head about such matters, for he knew that, after Waterloo had been won, the English and Prussians did not sit down to reckon up how many blunders each ally had made but shook hands over the result. Temple is gifted with a splendid insensibility as to means. He is neither sensitive nor over-scrupulous, so long as his end is

<sup>1</sup> It is but fair to Sir Richard Temple to add that his successful struggle with famine in Behar endeared him to the people of India. An address presented on the eve of departure from Bengal concluded by praising him for having set in his own person a high example of activity, endurance, and self-sacrifice.



gained, and this is the key to his success. Moreover, he never looks back, and, if a crime were necessary for strictly administrative objects of sufficient weight, he would want neither poppy nor mandragora to make him sleep soundly after taking such an executive step. Providence seems to me to work in the same fashion in this visible world. Could you not give us a reflective article on the idea of Sir Richard as a Typical Development?

Hunter travelled to Simla by way of Allahabad, Lucknow and Lahor, and devoted every spare moment at each place to putting the Gazetteer machinery in thorough working order. At Lucknow a dinner was given in his honour at the Club, and then he had a glorious moonlight drive between 11 and 1 A.M. through acres of soft, white architecture in a succession of tropical gardens.

From Lahor he gave his wife, who was then busily engaged in furnishing a house at Edinburgh, his conception of the interior of an English home.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

April 7, 1874.

I am so delighted with your accounts of the plenishing. You must make yourself very comfortable without waiting for me, but furnish in the style I like. Everything should be *petite*; all the drawing-room chairs easy ones, but most of them, of course, without arms. The dining-room chairs should be upholstered in green, brown, or dark maroon morocco. Avoid horsehair as you would the Evil One. . . . Remember, in everything you buy, that a bedroom should be essentially a pretty sitting-room, with a bed in it as if by an accident. Iron beds, but no curtains, dear. They are deadly things. Engravings in such rooms are equally atrocious. Slight water colours are preferable, and I will choose some when I come home. For goodness' sake avoid the solid British bedroom. I should die in it.

At Ambala he met Sir William Muir's two unmarried daughters with their chaperone, Mrs. Havelock, and escorted the trio to his Simla home, where they stayed with him until their own house was ready. The day's routine was registered in the diary:—

7th April.—In the morning I ride with the two young ladies, and work for the rest of the day (except an hour or so given up to calling). In the evening I ride again with Miss Katie Muir. After dinner we play bezique, or the girls repeat poetry till nearly midnight.



The health and future of his eldest boy was at this time much on his mind. Broughton was in his tenth year, obedient and well-mannered, but handicapped by delicacy and weak sight. He was attending a small preparatory school, and his father maintained a constant correspondence with him, showing how deep was his affection for this sickly plant. An undated fragment of a letter which belongs to this year well deserves to be reproduced.

TO BROUGHTON.

(N. D.)

I suppose the boys chaff you about your spectacles—"gig lamps" we used to call them at school. My dear, every boy gets chaffed about something or other, and there is a great advantage in having an obvious and innocent weak point on which this love of making fun of others may find a vent. Be sure that if they did not tease you about your spectacles, they would find something less pleasant. And there is nothing which so soon wears off as good-natured ridicule of some outward bodily defect. In the first place, there is always a degree of kindness and pure fun in such banter; in the second place, if you happen to do anything well, whether in play or study, but especially in games, this pity changes into a surprised and almost loving admiration. You become an institution in the school, and get the respect due to a boy who has done more than could be fairly expected of him. And, in the third place, you will get rid of spectacles altogether in a few years and wear an eyeglass instead. Altogether, pet, spectacles seem to be not a bad thing. They put you at a little disadvantage at first, but only at first. Try to conquer your shyness; join in whatever is going on (except it be mischief); and be frank and amiable with the other boys, and you will be loved by all.

His anxiety for his first-born was shown in the weekly letters.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*April 30, 1874.*

I look forward to your next letter as I have seldom done to any, for it will contain your impressions about Broughton. Be quite sure I shall rest satisfied with any conclusion at which you may have arrived with regard to his education. If the boy were old enough for the Edinburgh Academy, I should prefer sending him there in October, for the Scotch preparatory schools are so mean and in such bad form. On the other hand, if you think that he would be happier at home, I will not say you nay. But all the pretty instances you mention of his cleverness are no argument, to



my mind, for home training—rather the other way. I don't want Broughton to be too precocious. The ordinary commonplaceness of boyhood may not be the finest or most beautiful type, but it is the safest one. If he feels solitary at school, or has any griefs which seem serious, home he comes at Midsummer.

May 26.

Broughton's letters have sometimes been almost painful to me with their curious rant about "missioners" and their requests for sudden prayers for "the Church." I have not thought it right to say a single word of discouragement to the little chap, because, however gently I might put it in writing, my words might convey too much. But this is a religion without beauty and without rational production, and disfigured by a certain snuffing tone which belongs to and must have been derived from an uneducated mind. The nurse must refrain, once and for all, from talking to Broughton about such subjects.

His literary duties were at this time so absorbing that it is difficult to understand how he found time for so voluminous a correspondence. While staying at Bombay in January he had undertaken, at the request of Mr. F. Wyllie, the task of editing the essays on former policy left behind him by John Wyllie, one of the most brilliant and versatile men who have ever adorned the Indian Civil Service.<sup>1</sup> He had also on hand the biography of Lord Mayo, the compilation of the "Statistical Account of Bengal," with the direction of all the other Gazetteers throughout India, and the two volumes of "Classified Bengal Records." And besides all this he was writing a long letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and two leading articles for the *Englishman* every week. The ease with which he passed from one function to another, keeping the complicated webs distinct in his mind, is truly amazing. The home letters show these manifold energies in action.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

August 15, 1874.

I get such enthusiastic notes from Sir William Wyllie about my life of his son and the volume of essays. The old man seems to live in John Wyllie's memory. The mother added a P.S. to the last letter: "God bless you and reward you for your great kindness to our dear son!" The book will be only a moderately good one, but it will give pleasure to many kind people. I am anxious to hear what you think of the first three chapters of the "Life of

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 11th January 1874.



Lord Mayo" which I have sent you. Next week I get to his foreign policy. I shut myself up so much that Mrs. Lyall wrote to me, "I hear you are so quiet that I am afraid you are up to some mischief."

August 30.

I have had a busy week in some respects, but a sterile one in others. I had intended to make a big hole in Lord Mayo's Indian career, but it was only yesterday afternoon that I found myself able to begin it worthily; and then I rattled off sixteen pages of print as fast as my secretary could put my words on paper. I mean this to be the best and most interesting chapter I have ever written—a natural defence against Von Hellwald<sup>1</sup> and all Russian and French defamers who ignorantly attack our rule. I have also got through thirty-two pages of Records for the printer during the week, a thick bit of MS. of my "Statistical Account of Bengal," and a host of official letters. But my real work was studying English history. I managed to read 1200 pages of Freeman's "Norman Conquest," making copious notes. I am now working steadily and systematically at my "History of the British People from the Reign of Queen Anne," and hope to come to the actual writing four years hence with as sound a training as any English historian has brought to his work. Now that I am doing the thing in a professional way, Macaulay strikes me as miraculously ignorant as regards the essential analogies of our history, but gifted in a high degree with memory for decorative touches.

The price paid for this excessive devotion to letters was seen in the increased intensity of his neuralgic attacks. The correspondence with Mrs. Hunter contains few hints of his state of health, for he always spared her all avoidable anxiety; but the diary tells a very different tale. It proves that he triumphed by the exercise of sheer will-power over obstacles which would have destroyed the energy of an ordinary man.

The preoccupations were increased by prolonged discussions with the Government of India as to the future management of the Gazetteers, and the almost insuperable difficulties attending an attempt to serve many masters. He wrote "with a heavy heart" to the Member of Council in charge of the department to which he was attached:—

TO HONOURABLE SIR BARROW ELLIS.

June 6, 1874.

My work has already been subjected to the changes incidental on the advent of three Viceroys, as many Lieutenant-Governors of

<sup>1</sup> "Russia in Central Asia."



Bengal, each with strongly marked views, two Members of Council, two Chief Secretaries, and two Under-Secretaries. The special fitness which presumably led to my being selected for the work has had but little chance.

The Viceroy was, of course, the chief factor in the problem before Hunter, who had described him in a letter to Mr. Brian Hodgson as—

*February 26, 1873.*

A calm, cold Englishman, very slow to give his confidence, very steadfast when he has yielded it; altogether a man worth serving. He is a great contrast to Lord Mayo, but he has in Captain Baring an adviser such as no Viceroy has possessed in my time. The Secretariat here are wild at Baring's doing so much and being trusted so absolutely; but just at present the Council and Secretariat are at a low ebb in point of energy and talent, and Lord Northbrook is killing himself in trying to make up for the insouciance of his colleagues.

Thus, although radical differences of temperament placed a gulf between Lord Northbrook and Hunter, the latter was ready to acknowledge his chief's many sterling qualities. But as time went on the divergence between their opinions on famine policy became more marked. Hunter believed that the provision made for relieving distress in Behar was altogether excessive, and that it had been dictated by the panic at home. Having a practical control of the *Englishman* and representing India on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he did not hesitate to give public utterance to these views. They could not have been palatable to his superiors, and the rather anomalous position held by him became intolerable. At length, on 12th July, he asked Mr. Frederick Greenwood to be relieved of the duty of Indian correspondence at the close of the year, and the editor regretfully assented, while he retained his brilliant contributor as a writer of occasional leading articles.<sup>1</sup> In view of securing a suitable successor, Hunter wrote to Mr. James Furrell, a journalist of some note, who afterwards edited the *Englishman*, giving him at the same time his opinion on the battle with famine which was practically won.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hunter to Mr. F. Greenwood, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of 12th July, and reply dated 10th September 1874. At the termination of his engagement he wrote: "The tension between Government and myself . . . has compelled me to choose between public usefulness as the head of a department and my duty to you as a correspondent. I take my leave with very pleasant recollections of your courtesy and kindness during our connection."



TO MR. JAMES FURRELL.

September 1, 1874.

Of course there would have to be a continuity of policy on the points which I have taken up. In a few months you will have made your own mark and gone your own course. The only great question on which the *Pall Mall Gazette* is at present pledged is famine. I have tried to represent public opinion here with fairness. It is that the intensity has been exaggerated, and the provision made was excessive. But I also think that no certain basis for calculation existed at the time when the provision had to be made, and that afterwards the great fact about the present famine is that it has been dealt with adequately. First experiments are always costly, and this has been a very costly one.

This attitude was naturally resented by Hunter's superiors, and he felt the influence of the friction thus engendered on the progress of the "Statistical Account of Bengal." On 7th March he furnished the Government with a project for enabling the work to be completed at home in a shorter time and at less expense than was possible in India. The English standard of literary assistance was much higher, while the cost was smaller than that of inferior work done in the East. Every process connected with publication was cheaper still at home, and the India Office was the great storehouse of documents bearing on the history of the Empire. Hunter, therefore, proposed that he should be permitted to carry on his duties in connection with the "Statistical Account of Bengal" in the United Kingdom and make all arrangements there for the printing and issue of the volumes.<sup>1</sup> Five months elapsed ere a reply was received which gave him a hope of realising a portion of his scheme.<sup>2</sup> Then began a long succession of delays and objections which reduced the much-tried Director-General of Statistics to despair. The introductory volume by which he hoped to teach the public at home to know and appreciate their Indian fellow-subjects was suppressed. Exception was taken to innumerable points in the six volumes already printed of the Statistical Account, although they had been revised by the late Lieutenant-Governor and had received his imprimatur.<sup>3</sup> The correspondence dragged its weary length for five months,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Government of India dated 7th March 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Government of India dated 12th August 1874.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of the Bengal Government to Hunter, 2169, dated 28th July 1874.



and, but for the tact and patience shown by Hunter, the whole enterprise would have collapsed. The diary for the concluding portion of 1874 shows the vexations encountered and the utter weariness of mind and body which they produced :—

During October, November, and the first part of December I was constantly ailing, overworked and dispirited by the delays and vacillation of Government regarding the future arrangement of my office. Plodded along at Simla, doing my work like a horse on a mill, but too low and miserable to write my diary. I gave up my *Pall Mall Gazette* letters at the beginning of December. Wyllie's Essays stood still, but I managed to go on with Lord Mayo's Biography in an uncertain and faltering manner. In November I made a tour into the interior, and had a bracing fortnight among the forests and snows of the Himalayas. The rest and change of air temporarily recruited me, but, on my return, I became so ill that the Civil Surgeon of Simla gave me a medical certificate and insisted on my applying for two years' leave of absence.

Sir Richard Temple probably saw that the destruction of the edifice raised by so many years of patient labour must follow the departure of the only man in India capable of completing it, and that the honour of his Government was at stake. The fact remains that on 14th December he summoned Hunter by telegram to Calcutta in order to discuss in person the many questions at issue. Health and spirits came back like magic, and, within a few hours of receiving these orders, Hunter had packed up his records and given full instructions to his office. Leaving Simla at 2 P.M., he galloped down the road to the railway station on relays of horses, and accomplished fifty-seven miles before dark.<sup>1</sup>

A few days after his arrival in Calcutta he had a stormy interview with Sir Richard Temple, who was naturally sore at the opposition to his famine policy raised by Hunter in the press. The following day was spent in discussion, in which the position was handled in a calmer mood. The charm which Hunter always brought into personal intercourse slowly worked, and on 26th December, after a whole day spent in exchanging views, the former foes had a "touching reconciliation." Sir Richard Temple placed the whole conduct of negotiations with the Supreme Government in Hunter's hands, and asked him to

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 14th December 1874.



be his guest at his suburban palace, Belvedere, after a contemplated tour in Central India.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to read the notes, made while the phases of this compact were still fresh in the writer's memory, without rendering a tribute to Sir Richard's good sense and to a quality with which he is not generally credited—the magnanimity which subordinates the indulgence of personal pique to the achievement of a public end.

This great success gave back the peace of mind which is often the harbinger of returning strength. Hunter started joyously for Rajputana, reaching the headquarters of the British Agency, Ajmir, on 30th December. There he found Mr. A. C. Lyall encamped with a following of 1500, besides innumerable camels, horses, and cattle, the accessories of his position as Agent to the Governor-General. After two days' hard work in organising the Gazetteer arrangements, relieved by a ball, two dinner-parties, and New Year's revels, he was driven out by the Lyalls to—

The holy City and lakes of Pushkara, the only shrine in India where Brahma-worship is kept up. It is a strange mixture of Vishnuism, Sivaism, and something far older.<sup>2</sup>

He returned to Calcutta by way of Jaypur and Agra on 6th January, and was received at Belvedere by Sir Richard Temple. The next few days were devoted to framing a Minute in concert with his host, which summed up the progress of the "Statistical Account of Bengal," and suggested a method for speedily completing it. The information regarding seventeen districts had been already printed, filling 2250 pages octavo. For the rest, materials in the shape of 20,000 pages of MS. were available; but the task of compilation had not begun. Sir Richard Temple proposed entrusting the work to five Assistants in the Covenanted Civil Service, to be placed at Hunter's disposal and specially trained by him. He would be permitted to proceed to England after distributing the work yet to do in the interior among these young men, but would

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 24th to 27th December 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 1st January 1875. Brahma is the Zeus of the Hindu Pantheon, the Creative Principle in the Triad to which Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer belong. It is only in human nature that his altars should be deserted for those of his more useful colleagues.



return in November to visit the district where operations were in progress. 1875 was to be spent in England in printing and bringing out the entire Gazetteer, for which twenty-three months were allotted. Hunter was held responsible for its final form, the literary execution, and the whole of the technical details connected with publication. The Minute concluded with an expression of the Lieutenant-Governor's entire confidence in his energy, knowledge, and ability.<sup>1</sup> The design so clearly expressed was approved by the Supreme Government on the 28th January 1875.<sup>2</sup> On the same day Hunter reported to that authority that the machinery for producing the Gazetteer throughout the rest of India was working with tolerable smoothness, and that, except in Madras, where conservatism and jealousy of control were ingrained, the whole undertaking was within measurable distance of completion.

Some weeks must elapse ere the sanction of the Secretary of State could be obtained for the proposition of the Government of India. They were employed in a trip to Chittagong, a port on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, which might have supplanted the infant Calcutta as metropolis of India had the British succeeded in wresting it from native rule in 1689.<sup>3</sup> It is now the terminus of a trunk line connecting the Assam Tea District with the seaboard: but in 1875 the only access thither lay by steamer. From Chittagong Hunter went up the river, on which it stands, to the headquarters of the Hill Tracts, a vast expanse of forest-clothed highlands inhabited by aboriginal tribes. From this place he gave his wife a picture of these little known parts:—

The Chittagong Hill Tracts form one side of the watershed between Bengal and Burma. They are the wildest and in some respects the most beautiful regions I have ever seen. The river winds into them, with hills and precipices on either bank, and every inch of the landscape is covered with masses of bamboo, broad-leafed plantains, and forest trees. The tribes which inhabit it do not know the use of the plough, but burn patches of the jungle, and after cultivating the clearing for three years with hoes, desert it and move onwards.<sup>4</sup> The woods are filled with nearly

<sup>1</sup> Minute of Sir Richard Temple, dated 8th January 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Government of India, No. 133, dated 28th January 1875.

<sup>3</sup> See Hunter's "History of British India," vol. ii., 262-64.

<sup>4</sup> This process is termed "Jhuming." It is common to all hill tribes on our Northern and Eastern frontiers, and is the bugbear of forest officers.



every sort of wild animal, from the elephant, rhinoceros, and tiger, to the Java sparrow, which alights on a field in vast flocks and devours its crops in a few hours.

On his return to Calcutta he entered on the irksome task of teaching his five young assistants how to put into shape the crude material collected for the Gazetteer. Two of them have since risen to distinction. Mr. H. H. Risley, C.S.I., as Census Commissioner in 1901, has performed the unexampled feat of recording the population of our Eastern Empire in a fortnight, and Mr. H. M. Kisch has directed the Indian Post Office. They owe much to the habit of sustained toil and the taste for statistical research implanted in them by Hunter's sedulous training. It lasted almost without intermission for three weeks, and not till 13th March did the last of them leave Calcutta, armed with the skeleton District Account to serve as a model for his compilation.

Four days later Hunter received a telegram from Major Owen Burne in London, informing him that his scheme for the preparation of the Statistical Account had passed the India Council, and on 19th March his suspense was set at rest by orders from the Government authorising his departure to Europe.<sup>1</sup> His assistant and the bulky records of the office had been already despatched homewards. Hunter followed them without delay, reaching London *via* Brindisi on 18th April 1875.

Speeding onwards to Edinburgh without a day's delay, he found Mrs. Hunter and the children established at 6 Grosvenor Street. The day of meeting was one of great rejoicing, and the home created by his wife satisfied his rather exacting standard. But the calls of literature left him scanty leisure for the enjoyment of family life. The first volume of the "Life of Lord Mayo" was passing through the press. The diary for 18th May notes that—

The Hon. Robert Bourke came this morning for breakfast. We went over the first 112 pages of the book together, and I resolved with much regret to strike out several interesting letters in deference to Lady Mayo's wishes.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Government of Bengal, dated 19th March 1875.



At the same time he was engaged in writing the Indian articles for Messrs. A. & C. Black's new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Then there was the weary revision of proofs of the "Statistical Account of Bengal," which took all the pleasure out of existence;<sup>1</sup> and the Essays of John Wyllie did not stand still. These multifarious labours were lightened by the assistance of his private secretary, Mr. J. S. Cotton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, while music and a daily drive gave some relief to the over-tasked brain. Thus on 17th May we find Hunter spending the evening with Bancroft's "History of the United States," while his wife played the piano or chamber organ. A few weeks afterwards he was wrapt up in Green's "Short History of the British People," which sprang at once into almost unexampled demand. Its appearance demolished a favourite scheme, for, as we have seen, Hunter had laid the foundation of an enterprise on exactly similar lines. So true it is that in a highly developed civilisation human thought seems to run in grooves, and ideas occur simultaneously to minds which are far apart. The disappointment did not prevent the would-be chronicler of national life from rendering full justice to the author who had anticipated him.<sup>2</sup>

On 19th June the family started on a tour to the English Lakes. Hunter had Dr. Johnson's love for rapid driving, especially when the ribbons were handled by himself. He had purchased a Stanhope phaeton and a pair of young horses, which could, if need be, be ridden. In this he drove his wife and children through Moffat, Ecclefechan, and Carlisle to Keswick and Windermere. Nothing escaped his observation. At Gretna Green, for instance, he noted a tombstone inscribed to two brothers who departed this life aged 110 and 111 years, and the curious fact that one of the famous marriages had been celebrated by a weaver no later than the previous Saturday week.<sup>3</sup> He parted with Mrs. Hunter and the children at

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 11th June 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 8th June, "Reading Green's 'History of the British People.' Truly a great book."

<sup>3</sup> Diary of 24th June 1875. Under the Scottish Civil Law a declaration of marriage before witnesses is binding on both parties. Gretna Green, as the nearest village to the English border, was a famous resort of runaway couples, but its *raison d'être* was destroyed by an Act of 1856, which made a residence of twenty-one days in Scotland obligatory on one at least of the postulants.



Windermere, and went alone to London by train in order to arrange with Messrs. Smith & Elder for the publication of his "Life of Lord Mayo." While these negotiations were in progress, the young author plunged with zest into the many delights of London in mid-season. Music was always the chief of these in his eyes. On 3rd July he wrote:—

Yesterday evening I went alone to hear Patti in *Don Giovanni*. It was a great night, and stalls were not to be had at any price, so I saw the whole thing for half a crown from the amphitheatre. How paltry the mimic passions of the stage seemed from such a height! This morning I attended service at St. Paul's, not quite perfect, although striking in many ways from its smoothness and calm power.

Three days later he lunched with Lady Wyllie, meeting the Right Hon. W. P. Adam, of Blair Adam, his hostess's son-in-law.<sup>1</sup> In the evening he heard Wagner's *Lohengrin* at Drury Lane. The new music was then looked askance at by the profession in England, but it made its way to Hunter's heart. He pronounced the opera "most wonderfully beautiful."<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion drawn from a closer acquaintance with this side of English public life is stated in a letter to Mrs. Hunter:—

July 11, 1875.

What I have seen this time in town has almost decided me against looking forward to a Parliamentary career. No man can live that life in an earnest sense without sacrificing the comfort and sweetness of his home. This season I have seen much of three men, very different in themselves, but each following the same lines. The first is William Adam, the Liberal Whip, and the real mainspring of his party. He has adequate means, a beautiful place in Scotland, and a house in Eaton Square. Well, he never gets home till 2 A.M., and is off again shortly after ten. He sees his wife for about an hour and a half in the day, and though she is charming and popular, she is so utterly tired of London racket that she stays with the children in Scotland except during three months of the year. Robert Bourke is another—well-born, well married, rich enough for all purposes, but practically homeless. The third is Frank Rowsell, as good a man as the others, with

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adam was then "Liberal Whip"—charged with the arduous duty of mustering members of his party at Parliamentary divisions. He became Governor of Madras in August 1880, and died there in the May following.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 6th July 1875.



an excellent wife.<sup>1</sup> He has not the advantages of rank and wealth possessed by them. He is making his way; works hard all day and goes the weary round of society till one or two in the morning. I would not live the lives of these people for the greatest success that they could yield. I am more and more convinced that our duty is to live quietly and lovingly with our children, bringing them up well, and clinging to each other with undivided hearts. There is no success in life to be compared with that.

The news that little Mabel was suffering from a childish malady took the anxious father from the turmoil of London. He cancelled all engagements and hurried northwards to find his darling nearly restored to health, and then to resume the tenor of his home-life. It is thus described in the diary:—

*13th August 1875.*—Paid the penalty of overwork in a terrible neuralgic fit. Tried to get up at 2 P.M., but found my left eye quite blind, and was driven back to bed. For the last week I have been in a state of sleeplessness and painful depression from overwork. This attack will set me right again.

*27th August.*—Wrote the title-page and table of contents for "Wyllie's Essays." Finished reading the MS. memoir, and sent the whole to the printer. Thank Heaven that work is done!<sup>2</sup>

*1st September.*—Laid the foundation-stone for a new house at 9 Douglas Crescent, Edinburgh. Broughton, Willie, and Mabel each gave the three obligatory taps.

*3rd September.*—Working hard at the "Statistical Account of Bengal." Finished the preface of my first five volumes, and they all go out to India by this mail. The Doctor has promised to keep me going for another week with strychnine.

*6th September.*—Grinding at Lord Mayo's Life—the internal administration, but making no way. I fall back in despair on the mechanical work of my Statistical Account.

*19th September.*—To Blair Adam, the home of the Right Hon. W. P. Adam. A house that might send a member to Parliament; it forms an irregular village. In the afternoon the house-party had a long walk through the woods to Benarty.

"Happy the man who, free from party,  
Looks out from his window on bonny Benarty."

—*Sheridan.*

*21st September.*—Returned reluctantly to-day to Grosvenor Street. My conscience has been pricking me, and I must get

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Frank Rowsell was an Admiralty official, a journalist in his spare moments, and an old friend of Hunter's.

<sup>2</sup> "Essays on the External Policy of India," by the late J. W. S. Wyllie, edited by Hunter, was published by Smith & Elder on December 15, 1875, after the editor's departure for India.



Lord Mayo done by the second week in October. Got to work at once, and also resumed Latin lessons with little Broughton.

*22nd September.*—After a long lapse I recommence my diary. I was so crushed with work and anxiety to get Lord Mayo in two volumes, Wyllie's Essays and the first five volumes of my Statistical Account off my hands before starting for India, that I had neither strength nor spirits left for my little daily entries. I had also the worry of getting the "Encyclopædia Britannica" articles on India done to the end of "C." Our daily life was as follows:—Rose at 7.45 and breakfasted in time to allow Broughton to reach the Edinburgh Academy by nine. I often walked part of the way with him. From 9.30 to 2 I worked in the library, giving an hour in the course of the morning to my three assistants, laying out the lines of their work and commenting on what they had done. At two we lunched, my secretary, Mr. J. S. Cotton, generally joining us. At 2.30 we drove out in the stanhope, or, if I could not spare an hour, Jessie was driven in the landau. At last I had the pleasure of turning out with two young nags as nearly thoroughbred as I wanted for a phaeton. They are, perhaps, a trifle too light for the landau, and one has proved thoroughly vicious in the saddle. About four we returned, and I worked again till 8 P.M., when we dined. Many a pleasant little party we had, with R. Vary Campbell as our most frequent guest. Then there was music on the piano or organ, and so very tired to bed. My children have been a source of homely delight, and I leave them and my dearest wife with a heavy heart.

On 19th November 1875 the "Life of the Earl of Mayo" was published in London.<sup>1</sup> It was truly a labour of love, for its author was under undying obligation to the statesman who gave him a career worthy of his talents. First we see the brilliant, warm-hearted Irishman in his country-home, then learning all the secrets of administration during twenty years of Parliamentary life and five given to duties as arduous as have fallen to the lot of any administrator. Then the scene shifts to India, and the whole mechanism of the Imperial Government stands revealed. Lord Mayo's financial measures, which delivered India from the slough of perennial deficit, are told by his trusted Minister, Sir John Strachey. Sir James Stephen contributes a splendid essay on the great legislative enactments which made the late Viceroy's short reign so memor-

<sup>1</sup> "A Life of the Earl of Mayo, Fourth Viceroy of India," by W. W. Hunter, B.A., LL.D., of Her Majesty's Bengal Civil Service, two vols. Smith & Elder, London, 1875. A second edition appeared in 1876, and the work was afterwards compressed into one volume for the "Rulers of India Series."



able. His military reforms and the masterly foreign policy which made a friend of the sullen Amir of Afghanistan<sup>1</sup> and brought all the feudatory princes of India to Lord Mayo's feet, were sketched from information given by his friend, Major Owen Burne.

But, splendid as was the pageant thus presented to the reader, he turned with zest to the delineation of a beautiful and fascinating character. Of his early patron Hunter wrote, that "it was impossible to work near him without loving him. He had a tender consideration and a noble trustfulness which plucked allegiance from the hearts of men."<sup>2</sup> How grievous was the national loss when this great career was cut short by the assassin's knife is seen in this book as in the course of Indian history. There are few pages in the whole range of literature so pregnant with dramatic power as those which tell the story of his tragic end. The *Life* was received with approval by the press. Four hundred copies were sold on the first day of publication, and six hundred during the first week. But the author rated even more highly than public esteem the many tokens of gratitude which he received from those who knew and loved his subject best. The widowed Countess wrote:—

FROM THE COUNTESS OF MAYO.

*December 5, 1875.*

You have certainly succeeded in drawing a perfect and truthful picture of his lovely character, and as such—independently of any other point—it is to me a precious possession.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone, in thanking the author for a presentation copy, showed a candour which did not always mark his utterances as regards a political opponent. In the third person

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich, K.C.I.E., in his fascinating book, "The Indian Borderland" (1901), wrote:—"Then followed the memorable durbar of February 1869, when Sher Ali met Lord Mayo at Ambeyla (Ambala). Never was a more successful function held on Indian soil. . . . This desirable result must be largely credited to the personal influence of that prince among India Viceroy, Lord Mayo. Gifted with a singular charm of manner, and that fine and commanding presence which is ever considered by Orientals as inseparable from the attributes of greatness, he produced on Sher Ali an effect which it is difficult to over-estimate. . . . The opinion has often been expressed by Indian politicians that, had Lord Mayo lived, the war of 1878 would never have taken place.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of the Earl of Mayo," vol. ii. p. 345.



and the laboriously traced characters which were so widely known a few years ago he wrote:—

Indisposition has retarded his careful examination of the work for some days, but he now cordially congratulates Dr. Hunter on the success and skill with which he has treated an arduous subject, and the justice which he has done to a noble character.

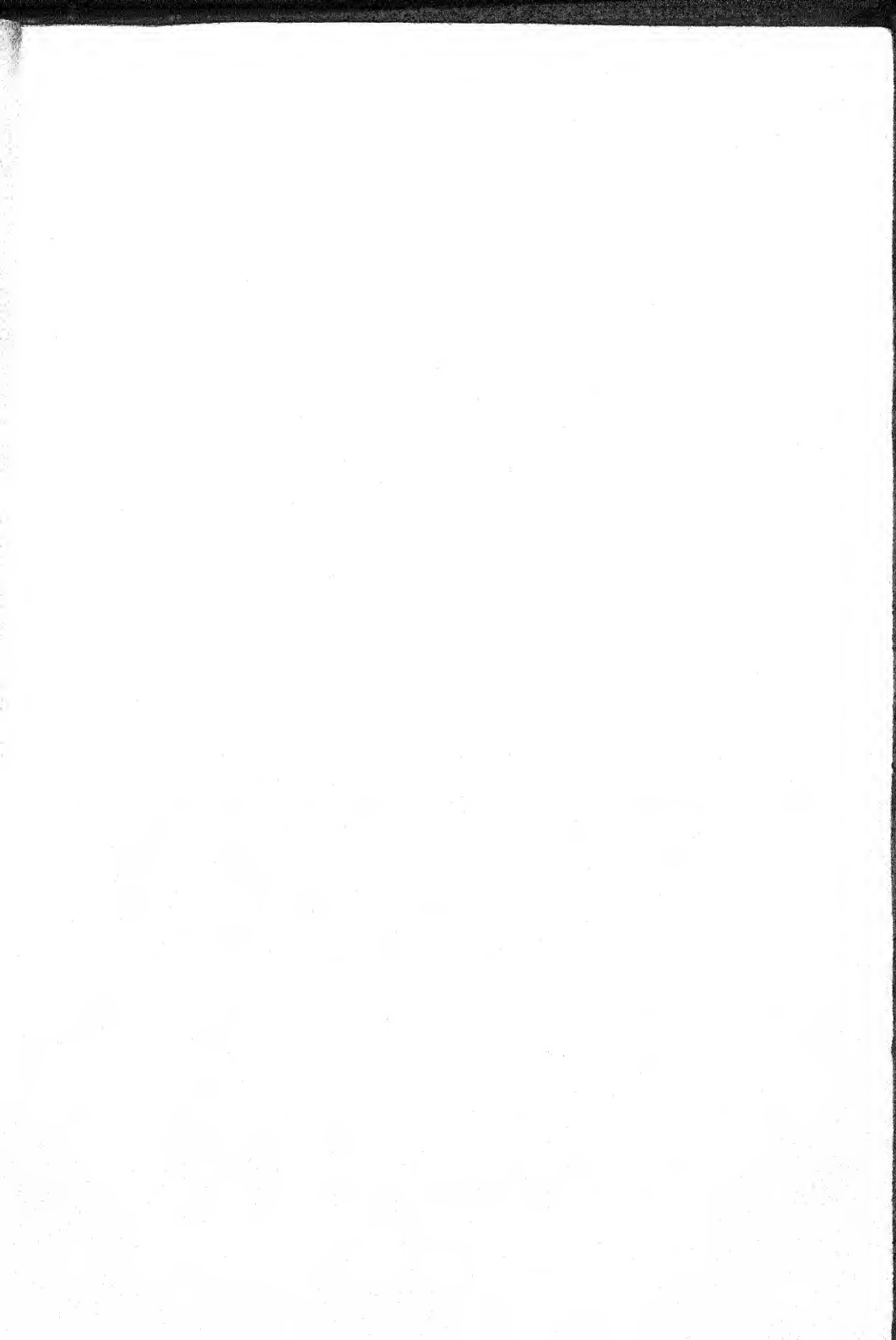
Congratulations came, too, from Major Owen Burne, who, as Lord Mayo's Military Secretary knew him as intimately as any of his colleagues:—

*December 17, 1875.*

From what I hear on all sides there is general praise and approval of your work. I like it immensely myself. The political chapter is much canvassed, and not altogether approved by Lord Lawrence's friends, who shrink from the comparison drawn between his policy and that of Lord Mayo. I warned you of this beforehand, and you altered a word here and there, but not enough to suit these people. I have been much rated about this, but I stand by all you say. After all, the context renders it clear that Mayo disliked the Thibetan policy of his predecessor, and you state this freely in the middle and the latter portion of the chapter. It is a curious bit of history. Between 1863 and 1868 Lawrence refused all help to the struggling Amir, Sher Ali, and said "I will support whoever wins." This caused the continuance of the civil war, which otherwise would not have lasted a week. Then he turned round and held out his hand to the rightful claimant. It was this attitude, and not that of the previous five years, that Lord Mayo heartily endorsed when he told Sher Ali at the Ambala durbar that he would "view with severe displeasure all attempts of his rivals against him." However it is all very nice indeed, and I only mention this to show you what is said at the Clubs.

The call of duty took Hunter to India while the tide of applause was at its highest. And he went forth alone, for the children had reached an age when residence in the tropics should be avoided and the mother's care is indispensable. On 18th November he bade them a sad farewell and travelled to London in a sleeping carriage—then a new invention. On the 28th he reached Venice, which was in those days a port of departure for the Indian mail-steamers.









*Photograph*

MRS. HUNTER, ÆT. 60, 1860



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF BENGAL.

THE unnatural severance of domestic ties is the heaviest penalty paid by Europeans who protect or govern our possessions in the East. Hunter felt this parting with his dear ones most acutely, although he knew that he could see them again in the spring of 1876. From Venice he wrote :—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

November 24, 1875.

I reached Turin on Tuesday evening, too tired to write, and so telegraphed to you. After dinner I went to the Opera and heard some second-rate music in a dingy house. The performance was relieved from boredom by a capital ballet, which told the story of a man led to perdition by a demon in the guise of a beautiful damsel. The idea was admirably rendered by a shrunk German girl with great, deep-set black eyes, who is creating an immense sensation among the Turin people. Next morning I started again before nine and reached Venice in twelve hours. My fellow-traveller was a Russian lady with her little boy, who was on the way to the South of Europe for the sake of health from an outpost on the Central Asian frontier. It fell to my lot to carry the child to the gondola when we arrived, and I was not sorry when the day's complacency was over and I found myself snug in bed smoking *your* pipe and reading Leslie Stephen's "Hours in a Library." I read Browning's new poem "The Inn Album" in the train. It is a sad work, for it shows that the man's growth in nobleness has stopped. London Society and constant dining out have choked his higher nature; and, so far as I can judge of him by his works, the decline dates from the death of his wife.<sup>1</sup> I forgot to mention that on the journey from Calais to Paris we had an amusing scoundrel in my carriage, who insisted on keeping me awake by stories of how he had "done" various custom officers, chiefly because they had treated him as a gentleman and a *bond fide* traveller. My soul rejoiced to see him marched

<sup>1</sup> The "Inn Album" was published in November 1875. It is a novelette in harsh and scannell verse, and was a bitter pill for Browning's most devoted admirers.



off between two gendarmes at the Paris station for attempting to smuggle firearms. I cannot begin to describe Venice. It is the saddest, stateliest, and most beautiful thing I have ever seen. Its half ruined grandeur suits my loneliness. I am terribly solitary, and long for you all in a way I cannot describe.

He reached Madras after a journey across India from Bombay on 1st January 1876, and straightway embarked on the arduous task of reforming the local methods of gazetteer compiling. The Southern Presidency had always enjoyed semi-independence of Viceregal control, and its administrators were very jealous of interference from a Bengal officer. They had held out against the system adopted by the rest of India, and declined to appoint a provincial editor or to refer to the heads of departments for statistics of the whole Presidency. The district officers were directed to frame gazetteers of their charges separately, and the results were endless reiteration and enormous waste of time and labour. Hunter had two interviews with the new Governor, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, whom he thought "a keen business man with an air of thoroughness,"<sup>1</sup> and after the second he wrote with a sense of triumph: "I have managed the business, I think, but it will be a tough job to wrench these people into the right way."

This success achieved, he recrossed India by rail to Kalian, and thence proceeded to Calcutta. On arriving at the capital he was prostrated by dysentery, which often attacked him when his other foe, neuralgia, was quiescent. But he found a true friend in Dr. Joseph Ewart, who insisted on nursing him into convalescence. While at this excellent physician's house he wrote:—

*26th January 1876.*—Working all day in bed and reading at intervals Bret Harte's fascinating "Luck of Roaring Camp." In the evening I pulled myself together and dined at Government House. Lord Northbrook took me into the verandah alone, and said that he had read my "Life of the Earl of Mayo" with much pleasure, that it was an excellent work, and contained nothing to which Government could object. He was good enough to praise my tact and discretion in getting over delicate ground.

Testimony as gratifying of the value of the Essays of John Wyllie was received about this time from his hero's brother:—

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 2nd January 1876.



From MR. FRANK WYLLIE.

January 10, 1876.

The Essays have been noticed by most of our papers here. The views set forth do not, of course, meet with much applause in days when the cry is all for action on the frontier, but the author is kindly spoken of by all, and the publication is not disapproved of by any except, perhaps, the *Athenæum*, which indulged in a little captious criticism.<sup>1</sup>

The main object of the flying visit to India was to gauge the progress made by his Bengal assistants on the "Statistical Account." On 22nd January he wrote:—

Finished my arrangements with the Lieutenant-Governor at Belvedere. Presented a statement of my work, district by district. Sir Richard Temple was much pleased, wrote a flattering resolution there and then, and ordered it to be inserted, with all the papers, in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

A few days later Hunter started on a river trip to Assam, the Gazetteer of which he retained in his own hands. In those times the little express passenger steamers which daily plough the rivers were unknown, and the journey to the tea district was made in ponderous craft, which occupied as long in reaching the confines of Assam from Calcutta as the overland journey thither from England. The incidents of river travel in those easy-going days are vividly portrayed in the diary:—

27th January.—On board the steamer *Progress*, Captain Butcher, struggling up the river Jamuna. Confined to bed by dysentery, but read Herbert Spencer's "Sociology," ed. 1875. His basis is this:—

The properties of the units determine those of the aggregate. In human society, as in the human frame, continued growth implies unbuilding and rebuilding of structure, which becomes, in so far, an impediment. Query: Is it as true in the one case as the other that the completion of the structure involves an arrest of its growth and fixes the society in the type which it has reached? This is certainly so with the Hindus. Their highly articulated caste system has created enormous vested interests, which are consolidated and protected against all change.

<sup>1</sup> The writer, who had just retired from the Bombay Civil Service, bewailed the change in terms which will find an echo in many an Anglo-Indian's heart: "We never know the value of a thing until we lose it. I was fond of India, and proud of my service and the position I had attained in it. So I feel at times low-spirited at the severance from all that had occupied my time, hopes and interests for so many years."



The traveller in India perpetually treads the dust of forgotten empires, and finds traces of buried civilisation where silence now reigns supreme. In the depths of forests inhabited only by the tiger he lights on vast reservoirs, temples and palaces. The river banks of the Gangetic delta are always alternately precipitous and flat, for the alluvial action eats into the land on the one side, and deposits the *débris*, in the form of silt, on the other. The perpendicular wall of clay or sand thus produced shows strata of broken pottery for twenty or thirty feet. In other parts the ground is covered for many square miles, after a shower of rain, with exquisitely cut beads of agate and rock crystal. So, in sparsely-peopled Assam, Hunter noted a mound, sixty feet broad, running parallel with the river bank for forty miles, and Captain Butcher told him that he had counted twenty-two ringed wells falling into the river at one time on the high bank of the Brahmaputra.<sup>1</sup>

The navigation of the huge steamer, which towed a pair of flats laden with merchandise, piled beside the deck cabins, was a perennial source of interest to his keenly active mind. He learnt that a vessel anchoring in mid-stream often intercepted silt enough to cause her to take ground firmly and become half embedded in the sand. In order to extricate her, it was necessary to excavate a new channel with the spade, and, in fact, the best way of studying the secrets of fluvial action was to make a river.

*7th February.*—Take a silt bank, and a handsome river with tributaries, cutting banks, and a delta complete can be manufactured for ten shillings. Captain Butcher once wriggled the *Progress* over half-a-mile of mud in five weeks, each of her paddles moving separately. Superstition, so engrained in the human mind, everywhere ascribes the vexatious delays to supernatural agency. On one of the voyages of the *Progress* he saw a Fakir waving a cotton garment at the door of his forest cell on the bank, and the steamer was unable to pass for three days. The crew secretly sent a boat on shore with a peace-offering of twenty rupees to the holy man, but still the paddles churned the muddy water in vain. At last a baby belonging to an English couple on board yielded up its little life, and the Fakir shouted to the captain: "You too have paid—the price of an English child; now you may go on!" And the steamer forged slowly up stream.

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 7th February 1875.



TO MRS HUNTER.

*February 11, 1876.*

This travelling is very pleasant. I have a good cabin on deck, and the weather is cool and bracing. Two of the passengers are, like myself, doing the whole voyage. One is a wealthy planter making the tour of his tea estates; the other a sporting Calcutta attorney out for a holiday. The latter has an assortment of guns and pistols which he lets off all the day long at the alligators basking on the sandbanks, or the thick flocks of pelicans gorging themselves with fish in the shallows. Then we have casuals—now a local planter, anon a member of the Assam Commission. From one of these I got an account he had prepared of an obscure hill tribe, which will figure in my Statistical Account; from another the promise of a history of the State of Kuch Behar. Another, the General commanding in Assam, will furnish a sketch of its military history and the distribution of its forces. In a couple of days I shall reach the Chief Commissioner at Sibsagar, and settle with him the compilation of my Gazetteer.

This hope was baffled by the absence of the magnate in the hills, and Hunter returned to Calcutta, whither he had summoned his five assistants to a conference on the progress of the Statistical Report. After a fortnight's hard work with these collaborators he bent his course homewards, reaching Bombay on 10th March. Here he busied himself in acquiring specimens of Indian art work to grace the new home at 9 Douglas Crescent, Edinburgh.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*March 13, 1876.*

My whole morning has been taken up by the great Jaffir Sulaiman, the most famous carver of wood in India. It is no easy job teaching the natives of tropical climes to make a mantelpiece, an article of furniture which they have never seen, especially as I have no model or even sketch to show them. However, by dint of infinite talking, I am beating the proper conception into their brains. To-morrow I am to see the mantelpiece for our hall in the rough placed against a wall. The visit of the Prince of Wales has put everything back, as H.R.H. has simply swept away all the pottery I had chosen—even patterns marked with my own name; but I shall have 1700 beautiful tiles for our dado shipped to England in July. The only way to get work done here is to go daily to the potters and carpenters and make their lives mildly miserable by one's persistence. So I shall remain the whole week as the guest of Mr. Maxwell Melvill, run up to the hill station of Matheran for a few days, and descend, very fresh, on the unhappy



artificers. On Friday evening I dined with a party at the Byculla Club, and had a glorious yachting trip among the moonlit islands which lasted till 1 A.M. On Saturday I dined with Mr. J. Campbell, my Bombay Gazetteer editor, and then drove my host out in a barouche to a moonlight picnic of champagne and ices in the palm groves at Mahim. We poured out libations on the rocks, with the salt spray dashing over us. I got back in the small hours. I am looking after Colonel Meadows Taylor, the Indian novelist.<sup>1</sup> He was sent out for the cold weather to Haidarabad by Sir William Jenner, but has fairly broken down. Poor old man ! it is fifty-two years since he entered the Haidarabad Contingent as a subaltern, and he has now become so blind and paralytic that he is carried about like a child by his daughter and a faithful Irish valet. To-day I am taking Miss Meadows Taylor to see my potters at work, and will see them safely shipped off for Europe on the morrow.

On 19th March Hunter visited Matheran, a hill resort within three and a half hours of the capital, and had—

Long solitary rides among the citron groves and along rocky promontories poised in mid air. In the morning came up a sea of rolling clouds, through which one had peeps of the valley beneath, and at eventide gorgeous sunsets over the islands and harbour of Bombay.

Ten days later, after finishing six leading articles and two long reports to Government on the progress of the Gazetteers, he sailed for Brindisi in the *Pekin*. The manner of his life on board ship—so different from the *far niente* of the usual overland voyager—is told in the Diary :—

RED SEA, April 6, 1876.

I get up at 6 A.M. and read on deck in my pyjamas ; bathe in delicious salt water ; breakfast at 9 ; then make a little courtesy tour among the ladies before settling down to three hours' steady reading. Luncheon comes at 1 P.M., and then I write leading articles till 5.30. A constitutional on deck brings me to the dinner-hour, and so to whist until the lights are put out at 10 P.M. Later I go on deck in undress, and listen to C. A. Kelly repeating poetry, while I look over the taffrail on the moonlit sea.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Philip Meadows Taylor, C.S.I., Author of the "Confessions of a Thug" (1839), "Tara" (1863), and other brilliant delineations of Indian society at critical stages of its history, died at Mentone on his homeward journey on 13th May 1876. He was also an administrator of mark, and rendered splendid services to the Empire, which were poorly requited by the Government of the day.

<sup>2</sup> Diary, dated Red Sea, 6th April 1876. Mr. C. A. Kelly, of the Bengal Civil Service, was Hunter's contemporary, and wrote an exquisite sonnet on his friend's death, which appeared in the *St. James's Gazette* a few days after the funeral.



Among the literature devoured on this voyage we find Lord Lytton's "Coming Race," Forster's "Life of Goldsmith," Matthew Arnold's Poems, in two volumes, of which, in the reader's opinion, the gem is the lines to Obermann, and Miss Thackeray's "Old Kensington," of which he wrote—"There is something of her father's depth and pathos in the last half of the book, when the pettinesses of description are over."<sup>1</sup>

He arrived at Brindisi on 12th April, and, after a rush through Rome, Turin, Paris, and London, he joined the expectant home circle in Grosvenor Street, Edinburgh.

His chief task was now the preparation of the Gazetteer, or "Statistical Account of Bengal," for which twenty-three months had been allowed by the local Government. A week after his arrival he sent the first five volumes complete to the Under Secretary of State,<sup>2</sup> and announced that an edition of 625 copies had been printed off. Three days later he promised the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal that the remainder would be published by the middle of November, in spite of the distracting delays caused by the necessity of sending every proof sheet to Calcutta for revision by the head of the Government.<sup>3</sup> On 31st May he forwarded to the Government of India a Quinquennial Report, summing up the progress made in compiling the Gazetteer of the Empire. Its successful issue was already secured. Bengal and Assam, with a quarter of the population and a third of the area of the peninsula, was retained in his own hands, in addition to his functions as Director-General of the Gazetteers of the other provinces. The pages depicting the native States lagged behind, because the Indian Foreign Office was jealous of external control, and the same feeling kept Madras from marching in line with the general movement. But a greater work remained to be provided for. This was a summary of the contents of the Statistical Accounts, which would place their huge accumulation of facts and figures within reach of the Indian administrator and the public at home. Such was the design of the Imperial Gazetteer of India. The

<sup>1</sup> Diary of 11th April 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 5th May 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 225, dated 8th May 1876.



question now arose as to the manner of executing it. If undertaken in India, it might occupy six years, and the cost would not be less than £6000 per annum. In England, on the other hand, the expense of literary assistance, such as India could never supply, of printing and publication, were much lower. The Imperial Gazetteer might be finished at home in four years, and the annual charges, including the Director-General's salary at £1800, would not exceed £3275.

While waiting for the decision of the authorities on the alternative scheme he pushed on the work already in hand. The diary relates:—

8th May.—Grinding away at my Statistical Account, with scarcely any time for private reading except German, which I am studying with Herr Weisse. To-day I drive my young horses without any previous training. They giraffed a little at first, but soon learnt their work.

19th May.—Finished reading George Trevelyan's "Life of Lord Macaulay," a model biography.<sup>1</sup>

Hunter reviewed this remarkable book in the *Calcutta Englishman*. The nature of his criticism may be gathered from a letter addressed to him in August by the chief proprietor of that newspaper, one of the very few men who could speak from personal recollection of the historian's brief Indian career:—

FROM MR. J. O'B. SAUNDERS.

August 14, 1876.

Your Macaulay papers are excellent, and you have divined the true causes of the feeling which arose against the great man in Calcutta. It was fostered by the lawyers, who fancied that his "Black Act" would diminish their business in the Mofussil.<sup>2</sup> The agitation was a godsend to the press, and the indigo planters of Lower Bengal joined *con amore*, but those of Upper Bengal, being more independent of Calcutta influences, supported the measure. George Trevelyan's book is singularly reticent as to many important facts of his uncle's life in India. On his arrival, Macaulay was received with great favour. The press was proud of him, and treated the splendid reviews which he sent home for India with a

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," by his nephew, now Sir George Trevelyan, Bart., the first edition of which appeared in May 1876.

<sup>2</sup> This was a measure of judicial reform which deprived Europeans in the provinces of India, styled the "Mofussil," by Calcutta people, of their old privilege of bringing civil appeals before the Supreme Court.



"one of us" sort of feeling. He was asked to preside at the St. Andrew's Day dinner, held soon after he reached Calcutta, and made a magnificent speech, beginning with a doubt as to whether he was entitled to pose as a Scotchman. It was received with prolonged applause, and I regretted that the reporters of those days were unable to give a worthy record of the effort. The subsequent change in feeling was partly due to what you say—the limited conversational powers of Calcutta society and its inability to appreciate Macaulay, and he was not slow in expressing his disgust. Then the lawyers began to grow irritated with a bird which was fouling his own nest, as they said, and who was said to have called them a tribe of horse-leeches.

The diary takes up the record.

*1st June.*—In London for three weeks. Much engaged at the India Office, and dined out nightly, except once, when I gave a dinner at the Devonshire Club.

*20th June.*—Took leave of the Marquis of Salisbury before returning to Edinburgh. He and the rest of the people at the India Office appear well satisfied with my work, and praise it officially.

*3rd July.*—Edinburgh. The same work, day by day, at these weary proof-sheets of the Statistical Account. It is going through the press at the rate of a district per mensem, averaging 200 pages, five Edinburgh printing offices being engaged at the same time. I am also compiling more matter at the rate of a district a month, and editing—often rewriting—the work of my five Bengal assistants.

*24th July.*—Broke the monotony by commencing "The Imperial Gazetteer of India." Reading Indian history for the purpose, and preparing a preliminary index of places, rivers, mountains, &c., to be described.

*28th July.*—Sent off my preliminary index to the printer; worked off all arrears, and insured our lives and limbs in the Accident Insurance Company before starting on a tandem drive across Scotland to Ardgarten, an Argyllshire place we have taken for the summer. We travelled in the Stanhope phaeton, my wife and self in front, Broughton and the groom on the back seat. Had great adventures with the leader at railway bridges and level crossings, but after halting at Kilsyth and Balloch, on the lovely southern shore of Loch Lomond, we arrived at our summer quarters on 1st August, after a drive of eighty-four miles.

*2nd August.*—Ardgarten is an old Highland mansion on Loch Long, buried in fine trees and overgrown with laurels and evergreen hedges. There is a park of thirty acres, sloping gently to the beach, and at least a mile of gravel walks, all in utter disrepair. I have been very busy since my arrival in getting the grounds into



something like order, and opening up a vista among the trees down to the lake. Labour is very hard to find; in fact, throughout the Highlands it is not capital but population that is wanting; but the men begin to work at 4.30 A.M. when they are in a willing frame of mind.

*18th August.*—Mr. Robert and the Hon. Mrs. Elliot of Clifton Park came for the day, and we had a crowded house, but were very jolly. John Hutcheson also arrived on a visit. We lounge under a great tree in the shade, he declaiming Horace, Juvenal, and Lucretius. Oh, these delicious days of bright sunshine, swims in the loch and classical readings!

*20th August to 2nd September.*—The days pass so evenly in this calm, sweet place that I need not individualise dates. We are a large party, with three or four guests always in the house, and changing from week to week. Our postbag, specially made up for us at the Glasgow office, is brought to our bedroom with early tea at 7.30. I distribute the letters through the butler, and begin work on my proof sheets, sipping tea the while. We rise at 9 and breakfast at 9.30. Then to work steadily till half past two, my secretary, Mr. J. S. Cotton, generally assisting me. Then the whole family lunch together, and I spend the early afternoon, smoking the pipe of peace, on Livy or Mommsen's annals. Thus I get the two extreme methods of writing history, and I really think that the one is no better than the other.<sup>1</sup> At four I take a couple of the guests for a drive, and the rest boat or fish. The young horses are now perfectly broken to tandem, and give us a twenty-mile spin through the most glorious region of loch and mountain in Scotland.

*7th September.*—Nearly dead of proof-sheets; sleepless at night and troubled throughout the day by dysentery, the legacy of frequent attacks in India.

*19th September.*—Drove back to Edinburgh tandem-wise; halted at Killearn; a poor little old inn and a graveyard full of Buchanans.

*22nd September.*—Paid a visit to my parents at Deanburn; found my father suffering from neglected Bright's disease. My dear mother is the picture of health in old age.

6 GROSVENOR STREET, EDINBURGH, *16th October.*—One day's work is like another's that a single description will serve for a week. My principal labour is the correction of an interminable stream of proofs of the "Statistical Account of Bengal." We have from 3400 to 4300 pages in type at the same time, for large portions have to be revised by—

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor Mommsen's "Romische Geschichte" appeared in three volumes in 1854-56. Freeman calls him "the greatest scholar of our time, perhaps of all time." He has the defects of the best German qualities, and is prone to worship brute force and worldly success, with small regard for the sanctions of religion and principle.



- (1) My secretary, Mr. J. S. Cotton, or myself.
- (2) The Assistant in Bengal in whose province the matter falls.
- (3) The Bengal Government.

Then all the corrections made are incorporated into a revised proof under my own eye. I am now drawing up a list of articles to be dealt with in the "Imperial Gazetteer" with reference to all sources of information open to me. Finally, I am reading Indian history greedily, in order to refresh my memory for the account of India and the great provincial articles in the "Imperial Gazetteer." It is a tremendous struggle in order to finish the Bengal work before leaving for India on the 28th prox.

On the following day he received a cable message from the Government of India announcing that his proposals for the compilation of the "Imperial Gazetteer" at home had been recommended for the sanction of the Secretary of State. A few weeks later came the final approval to his remaining in England for four years to complete that vast enterprise. Each article was to be submitted for the revision of the local Government concerned. The financial arrangements put forward by Hunter were accepted as a whole, but his own salary was cut down to £1500. The like privileges on a smaller scale were accorded to Mr. A. C. Lyall, who was permitted to reside in England during the preparation of the "Gazetteer of Rajputana," entrusted to his capable hands.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lyall, in announcing his probable arrival in England in pursuit of this congenial duty, had written:—

From MR. A. C. LYALL.

*August 15, 1876.*

I hope that you will be in London or somewhere accessible in November. I can hardly begin the work without much consultation with you; and, in spite of the infinite trouble taken, my materials are still very imperfect. The most intolerable men are those who undertake the Gazetteer as a "labour of love," a favourite expression, which means that the user demands full licence to do it when and how he likes.

On 16th November he was able to report the achievement of the "Statistical Account of Bengal." It was the most important link in the chain of provincial Gazettes, and contained the results of a survey dealing with a population of 63,000,000,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, dated 17th October 1876.



spread over a third of British India. The twenty volumes were all in print, and the author announced his departure on a tour through India, while his establishment remained at home to see the proof-sheets through the press.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Richard Temple rendered a well-merited meed of praise to the man who had carried so gigantic a task to a successful conclusion.

From the GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

No. 367, November 16, 1876.

The thanks of Government are emphatically due to you for the vigour and energy with which you have accomplished the collection of such diverse and varied information, and for the ability and literary skill which you have uniformly displayed in sifting, analysing, and arranging the materials supplied to you from so many quarters. The Lieutenant-Governor's thanks are also due to your assistants, Messrs. J. S. Cotton, late Fellow and Lecturer of Queen's College, Oxford, and H. H. Risley, of the Bengal Civil Service, who are especially mentioned in your letter.

On 30th October Hunter left Edinburgh for India, travelling by way of Marseilles. His *coupé* in the train southward from Paris was shared by two Chinese mandarins on the way to Peking from the Philadelphia Exhibition. He struck up an acquaintance with the strangers, whom he piloted through the sights of Marseilles, and entrusted with £25, to be laid out in Chinese curios for the adornment of the Edinburgh house. During the outward voyage he met a more interesting personality in Mr. (now Sir Ernest) Satow, on his way to a diplomatic post in Japan. The pair became close friends, and corresponded at intervals for many years. The diary for 21st November relates:—

Much delighted with a Latin work, "*Rerum a Societate Jesu in Oriente gestarum Volumen, Coloniae, 1574*," lent me by Satow. Did two careful sketches of the Jesuits in India Three Centuries Ago for the *Englishman*. Selected a number of poems to serve as an introduction for Satow to Browning. This morning he played over for me all the illustrations in Ritter's "*History of Music*."

At Galle he changed his quarters for a berth in the French mail-steamer which runs thence to Calcutta, calling at Pon-

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Government of Bengal, No. 367, dated 16th November 1876.



dichery, the capital of the patches of territory grandiloquently termed French India.<sup>1</sup> It is a sleepy hollow, where the streets, named after the heroes of the unsuccessful struggle for supremacy in India, are lined with convent-like buildings, the jealously guarded homes of a semi-orientalised population. On landing he wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

January 3, 1877.

I was met by the Vicomte de Lautrec, secretary to the Governor, and breakfasted with the latter functionary. His family is an "English" one, and his seven children sat down to eat with us. Mr. Trillard has governed many French colonies, and he introduced the eldest boy as a native of Cayenne, another as a Bourbonnais, a third as a subject of Queen Pomare of Otaheiti, according to the place where each was born. Not one of the family spoke English, of which the officials of the settlement were equally ignorant, but I plunged and floundered boldly, and found that, thanks to French good nature, I was perfectly understood. On Sunday afternoon, M. de Lautrec drove me over to the nearest town in British territory, Cuddalore,<sup>2</sup> for the ceremonies attendant on the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India. I was entertained by Mrs. Garstin, wife of the Collector, who is acting Secretary to Government. We had a bright dinner-party, and the ceremonies began next day with the start of the first train on the newly made railway to Madras. Then there was a wholesale

<sup>1</sup> I visited Pondichery ten years later, and found a resemblance to a *chef-lieu* of Southern France. The Creole ladies are buried in their walled retreats on week-days, but flock, in last year's Paris fashions, to the festivals and services of the Church. The only vehicle known was the *pousse-pousse*, a poor relation of the graceful rickshaw. At the miserable hotel two objects attracted my attention. The first was a billiard-table with a wooden bed, such as our grandfathers trundled their balls upon eighty years ago. The second was one of a series of engravings representing French naval victories, which is surely the most splendid instance of *suppressio veri* on record. It showed clouds of smoke from which the tricolour and the Union Jack emerged, and below the legend, "Action off Cape Trafalgar, 21st October 1805. In this bloody encounter Admiral Viscount Nelson, Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Forces of England, lost his life."

<sup>2</sup> Cuddalore, properly Gudalur, was purchased by us from the Mahrattas in 1682, and a strong citadel, known as Fort St. David, was built to protect the East India Company's warehouses. In 1746 the French took Madras, and their British rivals removed the seat of government to Cuddalore, which was twice unsuccessfully besieged by Dupleix. It fell, however, in 1758, and Fort St. David was destroyed. The fortune of war had other catastrophes in store for this bone of contention, and it did not pass under our flag until 1785. Hunter mentions in a note-book the curious fact that the British marked the gunshot radius round Fort St. David by planting an avenue of palms, some parts of which are two miles from the ruined bastions. This is still called Gundishally (gunshot) avenue.



liberation of prisoners. Forty received complete remission of their sentences, and all the rest had a few months knocked off the period of durance. Meanwhile a Gargantuan feast had commenced on the open plain surrounding the station. Cooked rice and spices were doled out to all who chose to ask for them, and a vast horde were busily engaged in stuffing themselves throughout the day. At four o'clock a Durbar was held in tents erected for the purpose, in which the respectable classes were seated according to their precedence, while the multitude stood round us outside. Then came a hurried dinner and a ball for the Europeans, and, after the second supper, M. de Lautrec and I started on our fourteen-mile drive back to Pondichery. I have found a vast store of interesting materials there bearing on the history of the settlement, but I cannot push on Gazetteer arrangements as quickly as with our own officials.

I have been greatly moved by Leslie Stephen's "History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century"—a landmark in philosophy and religion.

He reached Madras on 9th January, to find the land a prey to the severest famine ever known in Southern India. The failure of the annual rains in 1876 had brought ruin to the harvests, and the peasantry were reduced to desperate straits. The Government of Madras, under the late Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, endeavoured to cope with the situation by huge importations of grain from Calcutta, but the railway proved wholly unequal to the task of distributing it, and the beach was lined with mountains of rice-bags, which seemed never to grow smaller. Sir Richard Temple, Governor-elect of Bombay, was despatched by the Viceroy on a roving mission to advise the local authorities. His experience proved of the greatest value, although there was some difference of opinion as to the wisdom of a reduction, adopted at his suggestion, in the dole of grain vouchsafed to labourers on relief works. Hunter's share in the Madras famine of 1877-78 was less prominent. Owing to his acknowledged influence in the press, he was taken into Lord Lytton's confidence and furnished with copies of all reports on the measures taken to cope with the calamity. It is enough to add that the breakdown was complete when the monsoon again failed in 1877, and that nearly six millions of human beings died of hunger or diseases bred of insufficient nourishment. The lessons taught by this terrible visitation are written large in history. Under existing conditions, no Indian



Government can be held responsible for preventing all mortality should the annual rainfall prove deficient for two successive years. The functions of the State are summed up in the maxim, *In pace bellum para*. It must accept periodical crop failures as inevitable, and prepare for them in times of plenty. The land revenue system must be recast, in view of leaving a large proportion of the land's produce to the cultivator. Technical instruction and British capital must afford the means of drawing a portion of the redundant population from an overtaken soil. The peasantry must be delivered from thralldom to village Shylocks by the establishment of land-banks. But the peoples of India must play their own part in the great work of redemption. They follow the dictates of a creed which enjoins them to increase and multiply, without the smallest regard for the future. Thrift is with them an unknown quantity, and their resources are squandered on religious and social ceremony. They cling, limpet-like, to their scant paternal acres, though vast and fertile tracts close at hand cry aloud for the colonist. While the voice of prudence is disregarded and the standard of comfort is so miserably low, Indian populations will continue to be more than decimated by famine.

On learning from Mr. Lewis M'Iver,<sup>1</sup> his assistant in charge of the "Madras Gazetteer," that the arrangements carried through at the previous visit had been dislocated by the scarcity, he turned his attention to the causes of the calamity which had placed them in abeyance. "All night long," he wrote in the Diary of 10th January—

I was at the Madras Observatory, gazing at the stars and discussing sun-spots with Pogson, the Government Astronomer. As Pascal says :—"Le silence de ces espaces infinis m'effraie."

These communings with the heavenly bodies produced a theory which proved a nine-days' wonder throughout the world of science. An examination of the records of the Observatory since 1810 convinced Hunter that the fluctuation in the sun-spots, first observed by Schwabe in 1826, and the volume of rainfall in Southern India were intimately connected. He worked out an eleven-year cycle, during which the size of these

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Lewis M'Iver, Bart., M.P. for West Edinburgh.



spots waxed and waned, and found that periods of deficient rainfall in Madras corresponded with those of smallest solar maculation. But famine in India is a question of timely rain from heaven, and five out of the six which had befallen Madras since 1810 had come while sun-spots were fewest. In an article contributed jointly with Sir Norman Lockyer to the *Nineteenth Century* of November 1877 Hunter wrote:—

At the close of 1876 it was the duty of one of the writers to examine the Madras rainfall in connection with the anticipated famine. It soon became apparent to him that inquiries which deal with the rain supply of India as a yearly unit must be essentially inadequate. Native usage and speech strongly mark the existence of two distinct factors in the annual rainfall, and the local system of agriculture is merely a practical recognition of this meteorological fact. The summer monsoon, with its stately and ever-shifting procession of rain-clouds marching over India in aerial battalions from the Southern Ocean to their resting-place in the Himalayas, formed a theme dear to the Sanskrit poet. It seemed as if the continent “beloved of Indra” had only to sit still and receive in her lap the treasures which the winds gathered from distant tropical seas. Indra, the personification of the Watery Atmosphere, won his way to the supreme godhead of the Sanskrit pantheon by the all-powerful influence which he exercised, for weal or for woe, on a population of husbandmen. Himself gracious and beneficent, ever seeking to shower his treasures on the thirsty earth, he was nevertheless restrained, and from time to time prevented, by the evil spirit Vrita. Next to Indra came Vayu, the Wind, representing in his single personality the combined Maruts or storm-gods. The same Indra and Vayu, the Watery Atmosphere and the Wind, whom the Sanskrit race adored centuries before the commencement of our era, still decide each autumn the fate of the Indian people.

These speculations were interrupted by the unexpected news of his mother's death,<sup>1</sup> which had occurred on December 7th. The presence of strangers is insupportable at a time of domestic grief. Hunter “shut himself up and refused to see any one.” The diary continues:—

Very ill and heart-stricken about my mother's death. But Sir William Robinson, the acting Governor, and his chief secretary

<sup>1</sup> Of this excellent woman the *Kelso Chronicle* wrote: “Her life was spent in active and unceasing benevolence. In early youth her zeal for the emancipation of slaves was untiring. She was a diligent visitor of prisons and hospitals; and wherever her lot was cast her sympathies flowed generously forth to the mourner, the sufferer, and the needy.”



called, so had to return to my work and face the world again. The Governor took us to the School of Art, which costs £1000 a year and produces only imitations of third-rate English work. I was disgusted with the pottery and the silver covered with Hindu gods and goddesses embossed on teapots, milk-jugs, and even spittoons!

22nd January.—Arrived at Calcutta by the mail-steamer *Hydaspes*. The ostensible editor of the *Englishman* called on me in a terrible state of mind to say that the working editor had thrown up his place in a huff on Saturday evening, and that there was not a soul in the office who could write a leader or fill the editorial columns. Got to work at once and soon had everything in train. I am to do all the real work, which will occupy four solid hours a day.

23rd January.—At the *levée* Lord Lytton<sup>1</sup> sent his private secretary, Colonel Owen Burne, for me after I had passed the Presence; stopped the stream of people flowing before him, and conversed with me for five minutes. He was good enough to give high praise to my books and official work.

3rd February.—To-day I went to Government House by appointment to see Sir John Strachey, Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council, and Colonel Owen Burne. A long talk about the unsatisfactory relations into which Government has fallen as regards the whole Indian Press. I was asked to prepare a plan for improving matters.

On the following day Hunter submitted his project for the Viceroy's consideration. It contemplated a frank recognition of the existence of the Fourth Estate, and provided for the creation of an official mouthpiece charged with the duty of supplying newspapers with early and accurate information on public measures, and correcting misstatements and misapprehensions. In order to find a man capable of fulfilling functions so delicate, Hunter made a pilgrimage to Krishnagar, a large civil station about sixty miles from Calcutta, where a colleague on the staff of the *Englishman* and the Gazetteers of India directed a Government College. This was Mr., now Sir

<sup>1</sup> Edward Robert, second Baron and first Earl Lytton (1830-91), was one of the few instances of the transmission of genius by paternal descent. His father, Edward Bulwer Lytton, stands high in the second rank of British novelists; and the son took a prominent place among our minor poets under the *nom de plume* of Owen Meredith. After a long training in the diplomatic service he became Viceroy of India in April 1876. In that great post he was not an unqualified success. A brilliant *raconteur* and man of letters with a dash of Bohemianism was out of place in a starched society; his foreign policy produced a needless war in Afghanistan; and his financial administration was fraught with disaster.



Roper Lethbridge, K.C.I.E., who has thus told the story of the subsequent negotiations:—

Hunter and I had frequently discussed the relations between the Indian authorities and the Press, which had been as unsatisfactory as they could be ever since the Mutiny. Editors had no means of ascertaining the views and wishes of Government, there being no such thing as Parliamentary debates or the right of interpellation in Council. Thus, with the best and most loyal motives, editors were entirely in the dark as to the course and significance of public policy, and had to rely for this sort of information on the merest gossip, picked up in the offices of the secretaries or in the drawing-rooms of their wives. The *Pioneer* alone had, with infinite pains and ability and at a very heavy cost, worked up a close connection with many of the secretariats through the social life of Simla, and had for some time a monopoly of the official information to be obtained in this way. Thus the belief grew up, with some truth in it, that the Government was mostly responsible for the utterances of the *Pioneer*, and this was extremely inconvenient; for, however loyally the *Pioneer* endeavoured to reflect the views and intentions of the Viceroy, the latter had of course no power to enforce his wishes being set forth or followed. Thus it came about that no one knew exactly where the so-called moral responsibility began and where it ended, what was official and what was not. The arrangement also aroused the most violent jealousy on the part of the other great Indian newspapers; and Hunter, as a part-proprietor of the *Englishman*, was able to show the Viceroy how disastrous this sentiment might become. During the Bengal famine of 1874, Dr. George Smith edited the *Friend of India*, and was also Calcutta correspondent of *The Times*; and it was the opinion of many that his powerful criticism of the policy of the Government would have lost much of its asperity if he had been in closer touch with the Viceroy.

Hunter, as Director-General of Statistics, was at that time (March 1878) engaged in preparing "The Imperial Gazetteer of India" and he had obtained the loan of my services from the Government of Bengal, to be placed under the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, for the purpose of writing the articles on the Feudatory States. This work necessarily brought me into contact with the Viceroy and the Member of Council in charge of the foreign portfolio; and it was arranged that, while so occupied, I should also tentatively start the Press Commissionership, in order that the Viceroy and the Council might see how the plan worked before publicly committing the Government to its details. After a year's probation, the Council unanimously decided that the plan had succeeded admirably, nearly every editor in India having pronounced favourably upon it. Into the details of that plan I need not go, as it would take too much of your space. But in its



general principles it was simplicity itself. The Press Commissioner was the recognised intermediary between the Government and the Press, the editors being informed that I was authorised to address them on behalf of the Government, and also to receive and reply to all inquiries, complaints, and interpellations. At first the boon was extended only to the English Press and to native papers (such as the *Hindoo Patriot*, and *Indian Mirror*) published in English, and I do not think that Hunter ever contemplated any dealings with the Vernacular Press. But gradually, on my initiative, the latter was included, and I think that portion of the Press was the greatest gainer by its operations. It will thus be seen that the Press Commissionership in its origin had no connection whatever with the Vernacular Press Act.<sup>1</sup> But as the office was already in existence when that Act was passed, and as the Press Commissioner was already in close touch with all sections of journalism, it was resolved that questions arising under the Vernacular Press Act should be reported on by me.

When my appointment was on the point of being abolished by Lord Ripon, a strongly worded petition was presented to him, full of gratitude for the work of the office, and earnestly begging for its retention. It was signed by every native editor in India except two or three. There were between one and two hundred signatures, including practically every native journalist of eminence—men like Kristo Das Pal, Norendra Nath Sen, and Malabari taking the lead in this matter.

On my retirement the duties of the Press Commissioner were assigned, for economy's sake, to a subordinate of the Foreign Office, aided by a clever native gentleman whom I had trained.

During his short stay at Krishnàgar, Hunter visited the famous Sanskrit schools of Nadiya, which have outlasted Hindu and Mohammedan rule, and will probably survive our own. Young Brahmans flock thither from all parts of India, and if they are found "fit," as the phrase goes, they are admitted as scholars. Fitness implies a more than elementary knowledge of Sanskrit literature. It is ascertained by examination, but, curiously enough, after the teacher has questioned the postulant, the latter reverses the process and puts the master through his facings. The course of study embraces Sanskrit law, logic, grammar, and poetry, and lasts for twelve or thirteen years. Indeed, Hunter observed several scholars whose hair was white. After this severe training, which implies an enormous tax on

<sup>1</sup> The Act to restrain the licence of the Vernacular Press, which was passed by Lord Lytton's Council on 14th March 1878. It was highly unpopular, and was known throughout India as the "Gagging Act."



the memory, the student gains a degree of honour and blossoms out into a teacher or a priest attached to the household of a wealthy Hindoo. At Krishnagar Hunter obtained a glimpse of European life in the interior of Lower Bengal. He was impressed by its narrowness and squalor, and rejoiced that his lines had been cast in pleasanter places than the dark, half-ruined bungalow of an Indian judge or magistrate.<sup>1</sup>

On his return to Calcutta he lunched at Government House, and afterwards walked up and down the verandah for an hour with Lord Lytton.<sup>2</sup> The talk between them was of the new arrangement for keeping touch with the Indian press. The Viceroy remarked, "Falsehood goes twice round the world while Truth is putting on her boots. Our object is to give the truth a day's start of the lie." The discussion was brightened by Lord Lytton's gift for anecdote. One of the specimens recorded by Hunter was well known to Anglo-Indians of that day, but it may, perhaps, be new to the present generation. The Viceroy was once asked by a pretty Mrs. Birch whether he did not remember her name at Eton. He replied that he did, but his recollections of it were the reverse of pleasant. Being taken to task by his fair interlocutor for speaking disrespectfully of her husband's family, he said, "Well, if I have offended you, I am quite ready to make amends. I have never felt so much inclined to kiss the rod as now." He repeated, too, a naive remark on metempsychosis made to him by a young married lady, "If I am to be born again I hope it will be as a widow."<sup>3</sup>

Recurring to graver topics, the Viceroy discoursed long and earnestly of the famine which was desolating Madras. Hunter urged him to go there and see things with his own eyes, and then he broached the theory which had flashed on him while gazing on the stars under Mr. Pogson's guidance. Lord Lytton begged him to reduce these startling views to writing, and Hunter went home and drew up a memorandum entitled "The Cycle of Drought and Sunspots," which he had

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter of 9th February 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 10th February 1877.

<sup>3</sup> Students of French "Ana" will call to mind the cynical judgment of an eighteenth-century widow, who said, "Savez vous que c'est une bien belle chose, porter le nom d'un homme qui ne peut plus faire des folies."



printed off at the *Englishman* press. Copies were sent on the morrow to the Viceroy and other magnates engaged in fighting the famine. Eager to communicate his discovery to meteorologists at home, the author induced Mr. J. C. Macgregor, the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times*, to send an abstract by cable to the leading journal. Reuter's agent was at the time asked to telegraph a shorter summary to the chief newspapers of all countries. Having thus crowded a year's work into the few weeks passed in the East, Hunter started for England. The diary relates:—

13th March.—Left Calcutta for Bombay, the railway company giving me a saloon carriage. Played whist all day with the Bishop of Bombay, Lord Kilmaine and another man. In the afternoon played "Humbug," or two-handed whist with Lord K., who tells me that it is the rage in London. Of six tables at the Portland Club two are devoted to Humbug.

26th March.—Reached Aden. Met by the Assistant to our Resident, a namesake of mine, who is compiling the Gazetteer. Got him to write me, there and then, a complete report of his work, which is very well done, with excellent maps.

29th March.—As we reach Suez to-morrow, I may as well sum up the work done on the nine-days' voyage from Bombay. I brought all my official and private correspondence up to date, and wrote £50 worth of articles for the *Englishman*. Read, besides many novels, Sir Charles Eastlake's "Materials for the History of Oil Painting," and Mackenzie Wallace's excellent book on Russia.<sup>1</sup>

4th April.—Travelled from Brindisi to Caserta by rail. Visited the palace gardens and saw the sun set over a spur of the Apennines. Thence to Rome, where I made large purchases of statuary and curios for the new house.

15th April.—Arrived at Paris. This year's stay in Italy has been an education for me. The flashiness and poverty of the Parisian art shops struck me more forcibly than ever as contrasted with the display at Rome.

On the following day Hunter reached London, and, after attending a council meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, he hurried on to Edinburgh by the night train. He found his family ensconced in their new abode at 9 Douglas Crescent. It was perched on the summit of a beautiful ravine, overlooking the Dean Bridge, and commanding exquisite views of Corstor-

<sup>1</sup> Russia, its Land and People," by Sir D. M. Wallace, 1877; a second edition appeared in 1888.



phine Hill, the Grampians, and the bold outline of Fife, studded with townlets, seen across the gleaming waters of the Forth. Every part of the plan, decorations and furnishing had been contrived with a special view to the purpose of his four-years' stay at home—the compilation of the “Imperial Gazetteer” of India. Thus of the four rooms on the drawing-room floor, three were sacred to literature, and opened into one another, to allow of a constant supervision of the work of collaborators. Nor were evidences wanting of the master's consummate taste. The hall and dining-room were decorated with a dado of Persian tiles imported from Bombay, and five of the mantel-pieces were made of rare wood carved by the leading artists of that city. A more appropriate home for a man of letters, or one better calculated to serve as the nidus of the Encyclopædia of an Empire, it would have been hard to find. Thus, on the termination of his *magnum opus*, Hunter found no difficulty in finding a purchaser for his handiwork. It was acquired by Professor J. Stuart Blackie at a price considerably in excess of the large sum devoted to its construction and embellishment.

His first care on settling down in Douglas Crescent was to lay the foundation of the great literary edifice which had called him home. The diary relates the successive steps taken to accomplish this design:—

8th May.—Arranging for my staff of contributors for the “Imperial Gazetteer.” A vast amount of correspondence is involved, and I have infinite trouble over the advances and other financial aspects of the undertaking.

16th May.—My work at present consists in—

- (1) Drawing up a list of places to be dealt with in the Gazetteer. They will number 5000 or 6000. I wish to include only names that merit special treatment, and the difficulties of exclusion are the most serious ones.
- (2) Having accepted the District as the unit of treatment, I am myself compiling specimen articles to serve as models from which my contributors are to work.
- (3) Printing instructions for them, that each may know what information to give and the standard of length and contents of each paragraph.
- (4) Collecting materials by system, in order that my assistants may be steadily supplied with data.



On May 20th his youngest child was born. He was named after his parents' old friend, Mr. R. Vary Campbell, and is now training for the profession of civil engineer. As soon as the mother had passed the critical stage, Hunter left Edinburgh for London to take part in the fray which was raging round his sunspots theory. He had communicated the discovery to all the astronomers and meteorologists of the United Kingdom, and widely circulated a pamphlet entitled "Indian Famines and Sunspots," which attracted great attention. The diary records:—

16th May.—The papers are nearly all devoting articles to my "Cycle of Rainfall and Famine." A. Clements Markham, C.B.,<sup>1</sup> in the *Geographical Magazine*, Professor Balfour Stewart in *Nature*, and other men of science in *The Times* and *Scotsman* are supporting my views. The question is to be brought before the Royal Society by General Richard Strachey. He is the "man of science" of the India Office, and probably feels that I have intruded on his peculiar domain. He proposes to criticise me by applying the mathematical law of error, and politely hints that he is going to snuff me out.

28th May.—Staying at Bailey's Hotel, South Kensington, for a month, with my phaeton and horses, in order to fight the sunspots battle. The moment I arrived I called on Norman Lockyer,<sup>2</sup> and interested him by showing that General Strachey's line was to pooh-pooh the matter and discourage solar research in India. He telegraphed to Professor Balfour Stewart of Owen's College, Manchester, asking him to come up at once. The meeting of the Royal Society took place this evening. The General read his paper, much to his own satisfaction; and old Sir Joseph Hooker complimented the India Office on possessing such a thesaurus of science on its Council, while the courtly secretary smiled his blandest smile. But presently a venerable, white-haired savant went to the black board, tucked up his sleeves and proceeded to show in chalked figures the fallacies of the method which the lecturer had endeavoured to apply. Balfour Stewart followed him, and exposed the weak points of the paper with some acrimony. General Strachey in reply admitted that the meteorologists were against him, but added that he was an obstinate man and would still cling to his views.

I need not follow Hunter through each phase of the controversy which followed. It took up a large share of his

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Clements Markham, K.C.B.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Norman Lockyer, K.C.B.



attention throughout the year, and involved him in profound study of an unfamiliar branch of science. The correspondence on the sunspots would fill a portly volume. His theories received marked confirmation in a tabular statement published by the Secretary of the Statistical Committee of Lloyd's, which proved a close coincidence between the number of marine casualties reported to the underwriters since 1810 and the periods of greatest maculation shown by Hunter's tables. Other evidence was forthcoming to corroborate the belief that the solar phenomena were connected with cyclones. But Hunter's conclusions, albeit expressed with modesty and an entire absence of the dogmatic spirit, were traversed by some competent observers. The late Mr. H. T. Blanford, meteorological reporter to the Indian Government was inclined, like Sir Richard Strachey, to resent the intrusion of a layman, and attacked the cycle of sunspots and drought in an official report.<sup>1</sup> He admitted that some correspondence existed between the rainfall and the state of the solar surface, but affirmed that the data were insufficient to admit of any useful generalisation. Those who are interested in the dispute will find a mass of information in vol. xlii. of *Nature*. It must be confessed that the verdict of science on these ingenious theories is one of "not proven;" and I cannot help regretting that Hunter should have given such infinite pains to an abstruse and highly technical subject in which he enjoyed no practical training. The pursuit of science under difficulties did not prevent him from enjoying the delights of London at the best. He records:—

22nd June.—Met Professor Huxley at dinner—a great head and a true man of science, but apparently too anxious about maintaining his influence with the people, and posing as a universally recognised authority. Had much talk with him about vivisection. Dr. Matthews Duncan told me afterwards that Huxley had sacrificed science in this matter to a desire to keep well with the public.<sup>2</sup>

3rd July.—Returned to Edinburgh this morning, and got to work at once. I find I have got through a very large amount of business in London. Besides settling the finances of the "Imperial

<sup>1</sup> "Report on the Variations of Rainfall in Tropical India with the Cycle of Sunspot Frequency," dated 18th May 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Professor T. H. Huxley, biologist (1825-95).



Gazetteer" and coming to an understanding on all points with the India Office, I have begun the training of my assistants. Each of them have been made to understand his own peculiar province, and contributions are flowing in rapidly.

The autumnal fitting this year was to Allanton House, near Newmains, in Lanarkshire, which Hunter rented for three months from Sir Henry Seton Stewart. He thus depicts it in the diary:—

14th July.—This is a charming old place with a thousand acres of wooded park around it. There is a lake crowded with wild-fowl, swans, herons, and containing a solitary stork—all strictly *feræ naturæ* and never shot. Three gardeners are paid by my landlord, and I get the grapes and all produce. To the west lies a country of coal and iron, but the moorland eastwards is high and lonely, and the Clyde, set in a luxuriant valley, is only three miles away. In spite of frequent showers we have had some delightful excursions, and, as I now keep four horses, we are never at a loss for the means of locomotion. On returning from an afternoon's spin to the Falls of Clyde or up the valley, we stroll in the beautiful gardens, with their inexhaustible stores of old-fashioned flowers and cut armsful of roses.

These innocent pleasures were but episodes in a life of severe labour. Besides that involved in the preparation of the "Imperial Gazetteer" and the never-ending discussion of sunspots, it embraced a correspondence with politicians in India and at home on taxation; and it is to be regretted that his views did not find fuller acceptance. I need only add that Sir John Strachey's budget of the following December set apart £1,600,000 annually as a species of famine insurance, which, like the Sinking Fund established by William Pitt, was afterwards diverted to serve more pressing needs. He imposed a scale of licence duties on trades which developed into the hated income-tax; but he did not accompany them by any relaxation of the customs tariff. The diary gives an outline of the tasks accomplished during the brief stay in Lanarkshire:—

30th July.—I have just finished some heavy work on the Indian cotton duties, having drawn up two memoranda; one for Sir Henry Fawcett, who stated the case exactly in my words in Parliament; the other for Colonel Owen Burne, the Indian Viceroy's private secretary. My leading idea was that, although



the question is not one of protection, and the cotton duties are more justifiable than many of our taxes on imports into India, yet they will, sooner or later, have to be sacrificed to the Manchester party. My advice to the Indian Government is to face this fact while there is still time—to declare that it is willing to deal with the matter, but that the real question at issue is, not any single import duty as against another, but of direct *versus* indirect taxation. If the latter is to be surrendered, the only substitute is direct taxation, which in India means an income-tax in some form or other. The Government might avoid the chief sources of unpopularity attending such a measure by—

- (1) Conducting the needful inquiries, not by the income-tax officers, but by the Statistical Department, which has all the needful appliances ready to hand.
- (2) Reducing indirect taxation *pari passu*, as Sir Robert Peel did.<sup>1</sup>

My work during August, September, and October was fourfold : First, the formation of a staff of contributors to the "Imperial Gazetteer." My scheme provides that each should come to me for a longer or shorter period, receive a training in the duties, and then hive off to his own home, furnishing his quota in due course on payment by piece-work. This arrangement is the most economical, as it permits my assistants to carry on their professions, working for me in their spare time, but it involves much trouble and personal correspondence.

Of Hunter's nine colleagues, Messrs. James S. Cotton, Grant Allen, and Phil. Robinson afterwards became known in literature. The great work attracted a number of "outside contributors," as the diary has it, amongst whom were Mr. Lewis Bowring, C.S.I., formerly Chief Commissioner of Mysore ; Mr. H. Morris, who had been District Judge in Madras ; and Captain Herbert Lewin, of the Bengal Staff Corps, who has left a lasting mark on the Eastern frontier of Bengal. The diary proceeds :—

The second part of my work consists in correspondence with the editors of the provincial gazetteers in India, and my five special assistants engaged on the "Statistical Account of Bengal." These I push on, detecting gaps in their information, and doing my utmost to secure completion and uniformity in the local material for the

<sup>1</sup> In order to meet the alarming deficit left by the Melbourne Administration, Sir Robert Peel introduced the income-tax in 1842, providing for a rate of 7d. in the pound for three years. At the same time he swept away a crowd of oppressive duties on imported goods and lowered the burden on those which he retained.



"Imperial Gazetteer." All this involves many imploring letters to the tardy and indifferent governments of India.

The third branch of my labour deals with the masses of material which this double organisation in England and India supplies. I have constructed a preliminary list of about 6000 places, each of which will form a separate article in the "Imperial Gazetteer." It gives the result of my personal examination of the whole body of modern Indian literature, and of the local researches made by my assistants in India, district by district, under the printed instructions which I sent them. I have tried to include every place which is conspicuous in history or letters, or possesses importance as an administrative centre. Opposite each entry are certain geographical details, which form the nucleus of the future article. The list, which forms a folio volume, will leave the printer next month, and be distributed to every Indian government, the great departments, my assistants, and the compilers of the provincial Gazetteers. I will ask these authorities to satisfy themselves as to its correctness; and, in order to save time, I will add that, unless I hear from them by 1st July 1878, I will assume that they have no suggestions to make. The list, which is alphabetically arranged, forms the dry bones of the "Imperial Gazetteer," and it places that undertaking beyond the risks incidental to any life. The place-names shown in it, with the dates relating to them, collected for the provincial Gazetteers, are apportioned among my contributors, and each receives a skeleton form which he has to clothe with facts. I then sit at the receipt of custom, examining the articles as they come in, and paying for them in cash out of the £12,000 sanctioned for the whole work. The task of dovetailing the articles and reducing them to a uniform scale remains to be done hereafter. Some of my colleagues do their work admirably, with little interference from me, but others need constant watchfulness. A few I have had to part with, but I have quarrelled with no one.

The fourth division of my work relates to my duty as Director General of Statistics. By each mail I get a basket-load of reports from the provincial governments, which I examine with care, lest I should miss some fact of real importance. The compilation of the "Statistical Account of Assam" is also my own peculiar province. It is making rapid progress, and will be published in two or three thick volumes next year.

The Viceroy of India has employed me this autumn in securing a fair statement of his foreign policy and his famine operations in the English press. To this end his private secretary sends me telegrams from India, sometimes to the extent of £40 or £50 per week, giving the latest facts, so that I am absolutely master of the situation at home. These I communicate by telegraph to certain leading newspapers, either as special cables from the famine dis-



tricts or in the shape of editorial notices. These functions call for much correspondence of a very delicate and confidential character, which I can entrust to no one. I have also had some heavy work in following up my discovery with regard to the cycle of rainfall in Madras. The calculations cover several hundred pages of foolscap, but the bulk has been done by assistants working under my own eye. The results have appeared in various articles in vol. xlii. of *Nature* and in a monograph entitled "Sun Spots and Famines" in the November number of the *Nineteenth Century*. Mr. Norman Lockyer, F.R.S., who has been staying with us at Allanton, wrote a couple of pages of the article and signed it conjointly with myself.

Further, I wrote two leading articles weekly for the *Englishman* as a source of income. These I dictated to a rapid writer, walking up and down my library. They cost me an hour apiece, for my head is always full of subjects, and bring in ten guineas.

In order to cope with these multifarious labours I divided my time as follows:—Rise at nine, having read my letters over a cup of tea in bed; breakfast, and take a short walk in the wood or round the lake in the park. Then I work in the library till three or 3.30 P.M., with a brief interval for luncheon at two. Then follows a long ride, or a drive with some of our guests tandem-wise. We rush through fifteen or twenty miles of beautiful scenery, returning to five o'clock tea. Then I retire to the library till seven, to get through some private reading or indite a rare letter to a friend. I have managed this autumn to work my way through a thousand pages or so of English history and half-a-dozen of Miss Austen's novels, besides posting myself in a course of solar physics and meteorology. At 7.45 we dine, and the evening is given up to amusements—whist, good music, and a carpet waltz when we have enough guests for dancing.

The approach of winter drove Hunter from this pleasant retreat to Edinburgh, which he reached at the end of a phaeton drive through miles of bright sunshine and crisp ozone-laden air on 7th November.

Two days later he paid a visit to his old father at Deanburn.

DIARY, 11th November 1879.—Arrived at this lonely, ruined home to find my father looking very well, and Deanburn really beautiful with its late autumn tints. I roamed over the place, thinking of my poor mother, who was so full of kindness and her little household cares when I was here in November last. Everything reminded me of her—the books, the fernery, and even the Spanish ducks and long-legged hens.



He returned to Edinburgh to find the work which had given him ten years of anxiety launched on the world. On 14th November appeared the "Statistical Account of Bengal," in twenty volumes, every page of which bore the impress of his personality. His feelings at the successful issue of the enterprise find utterance in the diary :—

Trübner, the publisher of my Statistical Account, seems much pleased with it, and is anxious to have it well reviewed; but he writes that, while editors are most willing to do me justice, the critics shrank from so vast and dry a task. It must e'en take its chance with the British press. I shall be quite content if it fulfils its purpose in India, and enables us to govern the Empire with more knowledge.

These misgivings were not justified by events. A collation of the innumerable press notices with the contents of Hunter's works has convinced me that reviewers do not deserve the obloquy showered on them by the irritable race of authors. The "Doomsday Book of Bengal," as it was aptly styled by Mr. F. W. Rowsell in the *Nineteenth Century*, was awarded most respectful attention by the leading newspapers and reviews of the world; and in some instances it was handled with conspicuous literary skill. It would be difficult to conceive a juster appreciation of the merits and defects of the Statistical Account than the remarks of the *Saturday Review* :—

The sharpest critic must be tolerant of actual mistakes in discussing pages which are the production of overworked district officers, dependent in part on native authorities for information, and perplexed by incessant calls for schedules and forms. And even if we should find some lists too long and some notices too brief, some subjects unduly magnified, and others sketched with a hasty pen, we shall still remember that this is the first attempt to do substantial justice to our most magnificent dependency. . . . Topography, ethnology, agriculture, history, climate, and meteorology are treated of in the same lucid sequence. The statistics would satisfy a parliamentary committee, and the Hindu legends need not repel a genuine Pandit. And if the casual reader who is neither a red-tapist nor a scholar may be appalled by lists of fishes, by endless varieties of rice, by the number of prisoners who have been released, transferred, or executed, or by such petty details as the attendance of scholars at a day-school, he may turn to pages descriptive of our early administration, or of the traditions of wild aborigines, with the certainty that he will find information accessible



to him from no other quarter, set off, in most instances, by no inconsiderable literary grace.<sup>1</sup>

The influence exercised on foreign thought by a work which marks an epoch in the history of our connection with India is as admirably expressed by the *Berlin Magazine of Foreign Literature*:—

The comprehensive view afforded of the empire which England has created in the East will inspire the author's countrymen with a new and noble pride. It is not the warlike fame, the national wealth and power guaranteeing the overlordship of India which will leave the strongest impression on their minds. Rather will they be penetrated by a sense of the solemn duty imposed on England of preserving India from anarchy and making it the centre of a new civilisation to regenerate the continent whence the world derives the first germs of enlightenment and culture.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Saturday Review* of 12th January and 10th August 1878. The four notices were from the pen of Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service.

<sup>2</sup> Abridged from the *Berlin Magazine of Foreign Literature*, No. 32, dated 10th August 1878.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE IMPERIAL GAZETTEER OF INDIA

AT Christmas-tide 1877 Hunter visited Lady Susan Bourke at Coulstoun, in Haddingtonshire, which she had inherited from her father, the Marquis of Dalhousie.<sup>1</sup> As the biographer of his hostess's brother-in-law, Lord Mayo, he received a hearty welcome, and was permitted as a special favour to read her father's diaries. He found them of absorbing interest, and deeply regretted that a provision in the writer's will forbade their publication until thirty years after his death.<sup>2</sup> On returning to Edinburgh he heard by telegraph that he had been gazetted a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, which was founded to commemorate Queen Victoria's assumption of the Imperial title. He had been recommended by Lord Lytton for a Knighthood, which would not have been an excessive reward for his services to India.<sup>3</sup> A week later he attended a lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Edinburgh by Professor J. Stuart Blackie on the charge of colour-blindness preferred against the ancient Greeks by Mr. W. E. Gladstone.<sup>4</sup> The lecturer vindicated his hero from the calumny, but did not touch on the scientific aspect of the question arising from the sense of colour possessed by mammals, birds, and frugivorous insects. On Hunter's remarking this omission to Professor

<sup>1</sup> Lady Susan Georgiana Broun-Ramsay, C.I., daughter of the Marquis of Dalhousie, Governor-General of India, who assumed the additional surname of Broun on succeeding to the Coulstoun estates, and died in 1860. Lady Susan married the Right Hon. Robert Bourke, brother of the sixth Earl of Mayo, afterwards created Lord Connemara, and died in 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 28th December 1877. Lord Dalhousie's representatives will be free to publish these diaries in 1910.

<sup>3</sup> Diary of 1st January 1878, and *Gazette of India* of the same date.

<sup>4</sup> John Stuart Blackie (1809-1889), Professor of Greek at the Edinburgh University, was a most versatile man, and gifted with the fervid intellect of his race. He was one of the pioneers of the National Movement in Scotland which heralded a similar agitation in other countries, and is destined to exercise a profound influence on the current of civilisation.



Piazzi-Smith, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, the latter wrote:—

I have just met Professor Balfour,<sup>1</sup> General Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and on my telling him of your remark touching the lecture on colour, he pricked up his ears and at once declared that he would have the pleasure of sending you billets for all the rest of the session. He begs you will kindly make yourself known to him at the next meeting you may attend. He sits at the upper end of the secretary's side of the table—a small, thin, oldish man, called by the medical students to whom he teaches botany "Woody fibre," and by those who have been in Australia, "Stringy bark," but a most exemplary person for all that. . . . We are daily finding the reading of your book, "*The Annals of Rural Bengal*," as exciting and yet as solemnising as Gibbon's "*Decline and Fall*," though it deals with the inverse problem—how a great empire has been silently and surely built up. It is now the astonishment of the world for its extent, population, and power, and yet the fellow-countrymen of its builders are as ignorant as any people as to how the great feat was done.

Professor Blackie invited Hunter to attend another of the monologues with which he delighted his students.

He talked very eloquently for an hour on the broad view of culture adopted by the Greeks, as contrasted with our modern habit of looking at education simply as a means of passing some specific examination. He made Broughton and myself sit next him on the dais, and the students, 240 in number, cheered me most kindly when he introduced me to them by name.<sup>2</sup>

On the following day he gave a literary dinner in order to bring together the light of Scottish thought, the Oxford men whom he had gathered round him as fellow-workers on the "*Imperial Gazetteer*," and the German scholars who were giving him an insight into the language of philology and mental science.

A dinner party to Professor Blackie, David Masson, the biographer of Milton,<sup>3</sup> Rutherford, Donaldson, of patristic fame, Buchan, Secretary of the Meteorological Society of Scotland, Clements Markham<sup>4</sup> (who is staying with us), Weisse, Eggeling,

<sup>1</sup> John Hutton Balfour, Queen's Botanist for Scotland, Professor at the University and Keeper of the Botanical Gardens, was deeply versed in his science, and a man of infinite humour. He died in 1884, aged seventy-six.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 15th January 1878.

<sup>3</sup> His great work, "*The Life of John Milton*," appeared in six volumes 1859–80.

<sup>4</sup> Now Sir Clements Markham, K.C.B.



and my assistants J. S. Cotton, Grant Allen, Proctor, and Platt. Professor Rutherford gave us two delightful songs, one of his own composition; Professor Blackie sang his "Jeanie Geddes" and "Jock o' Hazeldean"; Professor Eggeling a volkslied. The sober Oxford Dons were a little surprised to see their *confrères* of the North unbending.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime the special work which was detaining him at home was by no means in abeyance. Surrounded by a band of collaborators trained by the moving spirit and devoted alike to him and to their work, he was piloting the Statistical Accounts of the various provinces of India and their summary, the "Imperial Gazetteer," through the shoals and quicksands which beset all great undertakings. Some conception of the obstacles encountered, and the zeal with which they were overcome, may be gained from a report submitted some months later to the Government of India. After alluding to the achievement of the "Statistical Account of Bengal," which he had kept in his own hands, Hunter sketched the progress of the others. Those of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab were practically complete. Bombay, however, presented an epitome of all the difficulties attending the statistical survey of a great province, and in Madras the Government had persisted in a scheme of its own which was marked by waste of materials, waste of labour, and want of organisation. In spite of these hindrances, the records of four-fifths of British India were actually in print, and formed a vast and indestructible monument of our rule. The data collected for feudatory India were of a less systematic character, but, taken collectively, they showed a memorable advance on our knowledge of the native States. The compilation of the "Imperial Gazetteer" was proceeding at the rate of 3000 articles a year; and Hunter expressed a confident hope that the ten-years' task assigned to him would be accomplished within the period prescribed by the Secretary of State. The machinery was already in such order that he found leisure for private study and correspondence.<sup>2</sup> The diary runs:—

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<sup>1</sup> Diary of 16th January 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Report dated 31st May 1878 to the Government of India on the progress of the Gazetteers. The Viceroy's approval was conveyed by a letter of 12th December 1878, and Hunter was directed to complete the "Imperial Gazetteer" before the end of February 1881.



26th January.—This month I have begun to read up the earlier chapters of Indian history, and have given much attention to the *origines* of the mixed races, of whom we unscientifically speak as one people by the name of Hindus. It is absurd to complain of a want of nationality among them, for they were never an ethical or a religious entity.

30th January.—I have been ill this week. The strain of teaching a succession of assistants during the last ten weeks has told at last. I dictated my weekly article this morning from bed. I am reading "Daniel Deronda," a wonderful book, but not the greatest of George Eliot's. She does not know high life as she does the evangelical middle classes; but no living novelist comes near her. There is an exaggerated power of suffering in her female characters which speaks sadly for her own life.

His own toils and suffering gave him a rare degree of sympathy for others. We have seen how he befriended Colonel Meadows-Taylor during the last sad voyage of the great Indian novelist, who, like Sir Walter Scott, revealed the romance of a vanished past to British readers and, like him, vainly sought relief for an overtasked brain in foreign travel. His autobiography showed too late how poorly rewarded had been the veteran's services to the Empire, and its perusal impelled Hunter to press the claims of Colonel Meadows-Taylor's daughter on the special consideration of the State.<sup>1</sup> He wrote thus to Sir Erskine Perry of the India Council:—

I have learned quite accidentally that Miss Meadows-Taylor is in straitened circumstances. As a Bengal civilian, I had been painfully impressed by her father's posthumous "Story of my Life." I could not help contrasting the rewards which come as a matter of course in the covenanted service with the scanty promotion earned by his long and exceptional labours. Though technically an "uncovenanted officer," Colonel Meadows-Taylor held what are now styled "covenanted" appointments, and yet he had no chance of reaching more lucrative posts, nor is there any pension for his daughter after his death. But it is rather as a man of letters than as an official that I venture to ask your Council as to whether it might be possible to do something in the matter. My personal acquaintance with Colonel Meadows-Taylor was a slight one, and in public matters, as regards the revision of Indian proper names, he strongly took up the view opposed to that which it was my duty to carry out. But I have derived more knowledge of Indian life

<sup>1</sup> This transparently truthful autobiography was published in 1877. It was edited by the writer's daughter, Miss Alice Meadows-Taylor, with a preface by Mr. Henry Reeve, D.C.L.



and native character from him than from any other Anglo-Indian writer. His works have given zest and reality to the daily routine of hundreds of young civilians and soldiers, teaching them to study the facts around them, and counteracting the besetting sin of Anglo-Indian life in our day—the tendency to regard India as a temporary place of business rather than as a career or a home. It has fallen to my lot to do something to systematise our knowledge of India, and so to render possible the present method of short periods of service and constant changes, or, at any rate, to strip that method of its most evident evils. The performance of this task has made me the more keenly alive to the administrative value of the influence which Colonel Meadows-Taylor's works exercise. They form a most salutary reminder that Indian administration is not, and ought not to be, merely a matter of system, but one of individual knowledge. The stream of native life which Anglo-Indians see flowing past them with unconcerned or weary eyes, becomes to his readers a drama full of reality and pathos. I believe that I am only one among hundreds of Indian officials who owe their first awakening to this fact to Colonel Meadows-Taylor's writings. Surely it must be possible to do something for the daughter of a common benefactor of this sort? I understand that Sir Salar Jung has given a small allowance of £60 a year, but out of his own purse and, therefore, dependent on his own life. The Indian Government spends little enough on literature, and has but few men of letters to pension or reward. The case is not one for relaxing the rules of the uncovenanted service or any other and thus creating an inconvenient precedent. It is the case of a man of rare literary excellence, who gave his whole life and leisure to Indian subjects (in themselves never more than barely remunerative), and who has exercised an influence for good on two generations of Indian officials.<sup>1</sup>

The allusions in this letter to the gulf which divides two classes of Anglo-Indian officials requires some elucidation. When Lord Cornwallis reformed the administration of India at the close of the eighteenth century he created a *corps d'élite*, styled the "Civil Service," which was recruited from home by nominations vested in the Directors of the East India Company. This body was known as "covenanted," because every civilian entered into a solemn engagement with his employers to perform his duties faithfully and to eschew private trade and presents

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir Erskine Perry, dated 12th February 1878. Mr. Henry Reeve, D.C.L. (1813-95), was a journalist and man of letters of high mark. He will be best remembered by his edition of the Greville Letters, which casts a flood of light on the political and social life of England in the middle of last century.



from natives. In return the Civil Service was guaranteed a monopoly of every place of considerable emolument. When, seventy years later, India passed from the Company to the Crown, the Civil Service was thrown open to public competition, but its privileges were not curtailed. Its members remained a hierarchy, hedged about by a cast-iron barrier which no merit or patronage could force. They enjoyed ample pay and steady promotion almost irrespective of their deserts, while their future was assured by handsome retiring pensions and annuities for their widows and surviving children. As the government became more complicated, other branches of the public service were created, and the necessity of giving natives of India a larger share in the management of their own affairs led to some infraction of the monopoly held by covenanted civilians. Now many of the "uncovenanted," as the interlopers were invidiously styled, belong to the same social strata as their colleagues within the pale, and are at least as well educated. Thus are generated heart-burnings and jealousy, which are none the less intense because they are not openly displayed. But for our national inability to enter into the feelings of others, the political danger arising from this anomalous situation would long since have been recognised. There is no more pressing reform in India than a reconstitution of the Civil Service on a catholic basis, with due regard for existing interests. It is greatly to Hunter's credit that he, though one of the elect, should have felt the injustice of these galling class distinctions. Such breadth of view is rare, and still rarer is the generosity which extended a helping hand to the children of one who had opposed a reform very near his heart. The chivalrous intervention was entirely successful. Mr. Henry Reeve, Meadows-Taylor's kinsman and executor, wrote as follows to Mr. William Blackwood, head of the great Scottish publishing house, who had brought out the "Story of my Life":—

Although I hate to ask the Government for favours, especially for my own family, I will write to Lord Lytton myself. He is an old friend of mine. But I should very much like to be allowed to send him Dr. Hunter's letter, because it is impossible to put the case in better language than the writer has used. I saw Sir



Erskine Perry this morning, and told him I should write to Lord Lytton. Meadows-Taylor left two daughters; of course, if anything is done for them, it must be divided between them. I shall ask the Viceroy to give them £100 a year each, with benefit to the survivor. I feel quite grateful to you for the kind interest you have shown in this matter.

Lord Lytton's sympathies as a man of letters were excited by this appeal, and he procured the grant of an annuity of a hundred pounds to each of the novelist's children.<sup>1</sup>

I have shown that Hunter was instrumental in establishing a *modus vivendi* between the Indian Government and the press which, with some important modifications, endures at the present day. The arrangements made by Lord Lytton to this end did not meet with his entire approval, and he was a strenuous opponent of the Vernacular Press Act, afterwards repealed by Lord Ripon, which created a most impolitic distinction between journalists of British and Indian descent. So strongly did he feel the shortcomings of the new system that he was moved to address a remonstrance to the Viceroy, the salient points of which found entry in the diary:—

30th June.—Notes for a letter to Lord Lytton on the recent Press Act. If the Press is to be muzzled, are we to allow private meetings, with verbatim reports of the speeches and proceedings? In short, is the whole mechanism of agitation to work unchecked or not? The Press Act depends on the people's ignorance and cowardice. Their ignorance, for the Indian journalist has only to reproduce paragraphs from English opposition papers and pamphlets in order to stir up feelings more damaging to us and more seditious than any of those quoted by Lord Lytton in the "reasons" for his new measure. He may thus defy the powers that be. Their cowardice, for if a publicist makes a martyr of himself by resisting the law, his cause is at once taken up by Parliament and the press. It is unsafe and ungenerous to presume the existence of such defects and trade upon them. The British people are aware that the liberty of public utterance with them has grown with the power to use it aright, and they are fully prepared to learn that such freedom cannot be granted *per saltum* to an Asiatic population untrained in its temperate exercise. But there is all the difference in the world between control and the use of the gag. And the title "Press Commissioner" is hateful in the ears of the people, whose passions are often stirred by mere names. Let his

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Mr. William Blackwood to Miss Meadows-Taylor, dated 18th December 1878.



work be done as at present, strengthen his hands as much as you please, but call him "Assistant Secretary to Government." The highest, the most constitutional function—if I may use the adjective—of the Indian civilian is to see that the Viceroy's reputation suffers no harm in the department which he administers; Lord Lytton's to ensure that a great literary name may go down to history without a stain. He should reflect how such a measure would act in times of agitation. Like the income tax it is a fair weather law, which would founder in the first storm.

The autumn months had hitherto been spent in the Highlands. This year the Hunters resolved to go farther afield and explore Scandinavia, which was not in those days overrun by tourists. On 25th July they sailed from Leith to Christiansund with the three elder children. After installing them in comfortable lodgings at Sandejfiord, under the care of a capable Norwegian nurse, the parents steamed up the coast to Bergen, and thence travelled across the peninsula by carriage. They lived on reindeer steaks and salmon trout, and revelled in the pure air and silence of lake and mountain ridge, clothed with birches of all sizes, from the stately plantations to be found at lower levels to the stunted and ghostly coppices which survive the Arctic cold at altitudes of 2500 feet. Nor was Hunter less favourably impressed with the stalwart race inhabiting this northern land, whose quiet prosperity and rational enjoyment of Nature's gifts contrasted strangely with the feverish existence from which he was enjoying a brief respite. He wrote a few weeks later to Mr. Brian Hodgson:—

*August 14, 1878.*

Norway is a land without landlords, for every yeoman tills his own little farm and sails his own fishing boat. There are no nobles excepting two foreigners, and a great feeling of friendliness and equality prevails among the people. In this country one sees no extremes of poverty or riches, and a marked absence of the evils and the social graces developed by class distinctions.

On arriving at Christiana Hunter found a congenial spirit in the Director of the Statistical Bureau, who explained his system of record, and introduced him to the leading politicians of Norway at a party given in his young colleague's honour. After rejoining their children at Sandejfiord, the Hunters



steamed to Stockholm by way of Gothenburg and the Gotha Canal. The diary takes up the tale of the Scandinavian tour:—

7th September.—Sailing down the Baltic to Copenhagen in a dirty old boat which is used chiefly for goods, but on this trip happened to be crowded. The captain was so drunk that I formally objected to the mate giving up his watch, and the poor man was on duty continuously for twenty-six hours.

9th September.—Copenhagen. Visited the citadel. Struck by the value of a sheet of water in the inner square of the fortifications as a safe bed for falling shells. Thence to the Thorwaldsen Museum, which has given me the most impressive lesson I have yet learned of a life's steady labour. It is beyond words. Bought casts of the great sculptor's smaller works, all replete with dignity and a tender grace worthy of the best period of Attic art.

It was Hunter's privilege to make friends everywhere, and to retain them long after the impression derived from personal intercourse had passed away. He kept up a correspondence for several years with Norwegian statesmen and *savants*, and had he found time to revisit the shores of the Baltic, his circle of interests there would have grown wider. The same faculty stood him in good stead during his frequent voyages to India. Sir Ernest Satow, with whom he had travelled to Galle in November 1876, wrote to him nearly two years later:—

YEDO, September 9, 1878.

If you take any interest in Japanese affairs I hope you will spare half-an-hour to look at an article of mine in the July number of the *Westminster Review* under the title of "The Mythology and Religious Worship of the Ancient Japanese." I had styled it simply "Ancient Japanese Rituals," for the express reason that it says little about mythology, which is a subject to write at a future date; but this possibility is cut away by the rechristening of my bantling. . . . We have settled down quietly again after the rebellion of last year, and the murder of the principal Cabinet Minister. But about a fortnight ago our midnight rest was disturbed by a mutiny amongst the Artillery of the Guard, who were discontented because their pay had been reduced. They meant to seize and murder the chief members of the Government; but the latter, by the merest chance got wind of the plot about eight hours before the outbreak and were able to take preventive measures, so that there was little fighting and less bloodshed. It is, nevertheless, an ugly omen that the very peasant soldiers whom the men in power have enrolled to put down the warrior class should in their turn exhibit signs of unrest.



At the close of this year Hunter made his *début* as a public speaker. The topic chosen was the "Rude Races of India," whom he had profoundly studied as a preparation for his "Dictionary of Non-Aryan Languages." He discoursed on these relics of a prehistoric past before the New Speculative Society of Edinburgh on 20th December 1878, and the subject attracted so much attention that he was led to examine it at greater length in two lectures delivered at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in the February following. He had a clear, well-modulated utterance and the gift of fixing an audience's attention on abstruse subjects. Thus the fame of the Edinburgh addresses reached London, and he was invited to discuss the same subject at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of London. On 24th April 1879 he lectured before that body on the manner in which the Indian races had been built up, tracing the history and manners of the successive waves of immigrants that formed the basis of the existing population. The glimpses which we obtain of India four thousand years ago disclose, he said, two sections struggling for the mastery:—

The one was a fair-skinned people, which had lately entered by the north-western passes, of Aryan—literally "noble"—parentage, speaking a stately language and worshipping powerful and friendly gods. It is from a Western branch of this superior race that we ourselves descend. The other section was a congeries of aboriginal tribes, whom the lordly new-comers drove before them into the mountains or reduced to abject servitude—obscure tribes who, in the absence of a race-name of their own, are called non-Aryans. They have left no written records; indeed the use of the simplest hieroglyphics was to them unknown. The sole works of their hands which have come down to us are stone circles and rude upright slabs beneath which, like the primitive peoples of Europe, they buried their dead. From their graves we discover that they knew how to make vases of earthenware, not inelegant in form, that they fought with iron weapons and wore ornaments of gold and copper. We learn, too, that they employed this form of sepulture after the commencement of the Christian era, for we have found coins of Augustus and Tiberius in their burial-places.

The lecturer went on to tell how tribes who have concealed themselves for ages in sullen isolation from Hindu and Mohammedan aggression were becoming prosperous communities under British rule. While the Aryan conquerers stood firmly on



the ancient ways marked out by caste and religion, these aborigines were waiting for a higher civilisation and faith. They afforded a most promising field for the administrator and the missionary, and on Great Britain lay the responsibility of implanting her own ideals of life and thought on this virgin soil. His peroration rose to a high degree of eloquence :—

These rude aboriginal tribes form living specimens saved from the wreck of the prehistoric world. They enable us to understand those early stages of human progress which have long disappeared from Europe, but through which our ancestors assuredly passed. We can watch cromlech-builders at work before our eyes in Southern Madras. We can mix with tribes in Central India who, until lately, used flint weapons such as our forefathers fought and hunted with in Scandinavia. The present aspect of these races enables us to realise how very low was the original type of mankind in India, and to appreciate the progress which humanity has made even there. One branch of the Aryan race commenced the work of civilising India four thousand years ago. To another branch has fallen the duty of continuing the task. It is, indeed, a heavy, and often a disheartening one. But in moments of failure it is something to remember that the history of our rule in India is one of progress from the lower to the higher type—that if our countrymen are but steadfast in their duty, the eternal laws of evolution and human development will be “strong siding champions” in the work.

On 15th January 1879, Hunter began a “Short History of the Indian People,” a work which he undertook at the request of the Madras Government; but the heavy labour entailed by the Gazetteer reduced the output to about thirty pages a month. A visit to Paris broke the monotony of the daily task. He arrived there on 10th May, and took apartments at 19 Rue Chaptal, whence he wrote to Mrs. Hunter :—

*May 15, 1879.*

I have delivered Saunders's letter to Mrs. Crawford, a most intelligent lady who has once been pretty, and is now very frank and kind. She took me yesterday to M. Cernuschi, the great bi-metallist, whose unrivalled collection of Japanese art Mr. Satow asked me inspect. She has also got a professor for me, a M. Legoff, who is coming to read with me this afternoon. I have seen hardly any Englishmen, as I wish to speak French tolerably. To-night I go with Mrs. Crawford to hear *Ruy Blas* at the Français, and have shut myself up hermetically since yesterday afternoon to study the play.



I have seen Gambetta thrice—on Sunday morning at his palace, again at a wedding where he proposed the health of the young couple, and a third time as president of the Chamber. He strikes me as one who is waiting to catch his cue, and not as a man of free or spontaneous thought. Of course he is a sincere republican—every one is this ostensibly—but how far a republican is the question. I don't think he knows himself. He is waiting on Providence, and watching the weathercock.

June 2.

M. Legoff and I have been hiding our heads for a couple of days at Fontainebleau. I had no idea that the modern art in the château was so utterly bad. The artists who grew up in the vile school of the First Empire bore their worst fruits under Louis Philippe, and Fontainebleau seems to have been chosen as a depository of all that is abominable among their productions.

Under M. Legoff's guidance Hunter soon acquired a very fair knowledge of colloquial French, though his accent was never quite Parisian. That his literary acquaintance with that difficult language was more than passable is shown by his criticisms addressed to Mr. Vaucorbeil, director of the Opera, of a representation of the sumptuous *Roi de Lahore*:—

[N.D.]

D'abord dans le cortège du roi figurent plusieurs guerriers sans moustaches. Or, à la cour d'un Rajah indien les hommes sans moustaches sont des Eunuques. Deuxièmement, le Premier Ministre doit se tenir auprès du Roi aux réceptions publiques. Ce personnage dans les cours hindoues est presque toujours un Brahman vêtu de blanc. Sa robe simple et sans ornement le distingue dans la foule étincelante de soldats, de courtisans et d'esclaves. Une telle figure, haute et grave, ferait un bon effet. Troisièmement, votre cour salue avec grace, mais c'est selon la manière turque, non suivant la manière indienne. Celle-ci est plus grave and et plus solennelle. Elle consiste à joindre les mains et les élever jusqu'au front en le touchant.

He returned home on 3rd July, and in the following month he took his wife and three children for a tandem-drive to Cape Wrath. It inspired the following "Notes on Driving," which show the aspect of our highways in the long interval between the disappearance of coaches and the advent of the ubiquitous bicycle:—

I have been asked to jot down some of my driving experience with a view of showing how far that pleasant mode of travel



is practicable in these railway days. It is quite true that on the great coaching roads it is difficult in certain parts of the country to find accommodation for four, or even two horses. I was once kept waiting on a wet and windy night outside a gaunt pile of buildings with a historic signboard swinging in front. Forty years ago it was a busy changing-place on the North Road, with stabling for twenty-four horses and two ordinaries a-day; but, unknown to guide-book writers, it had been transformed into the stead of a farmer of the new school, who had studied chemistry at a Scotch college, and humoured the local antiquarian society by allowing the old signboard to creak on as a memorial of the past. The good gentleman must have read Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," for, though we disturbed him in the act of retiring for the night, he received us most hospitably. He entertained us till midnight with a fund of stories about the place in his father's time, and next morning pointed out how he had converted the grand old stable into model cowsheds. The truth is that no guide-book exists for the man who wishes to ride or drive through some of the most romantic parts of these islands. The latest are more than fifty years old, and refer to a state of things which has passed away.

I had heard a good deal about the difficulty of a driving tour through the Northern Highlands. The opening of the railway which will connect Stirling with Oban had starved the coaches off the roads. I was told that I should find the hotels filled with people who had shootings and fishings in the neighbourhood. As a good deal of the country was new to me, I thought I should like to find things out for myself, and on 12th August I started on a tandem tour from Edinburgh to Cape Wrath. My horses were Irishmen, bay geldings standing 16.3, sons of a well-known sire, and as highly bred as is consistent with the bone and muscle required for a roadster's work. I had broken them myself to tandem. The wheeler, "Prince," was a horse possessed of grim humour and a profound sense of responsibility. He was cool-headed and steady as a rock in danger, but cursed with a hard mouth, and apt to show resentment whenever I touched up the leader by taking the bit in his teeth and starting off at a gallop on his own account. My leader, "Shamrock," was a trifle lighter in frame and much more so in character. He had a mouth of velvet and a clear conception of his duties on level and hilly ground alike. His chief failing was a thirst for knowledge. Thus he had an insatiable curiosity as to the other side of walls and hedges, and if suddenly recalled to his immediate surroundings by a scrap of paper scudding in front, would skip over it or shy playfully across the road. The only other blemish in his nature was a too frequent craving to partake of hospitality by the way. Every gentleman's gateway he came to was the signal for an effort



to turn in, and when long experience had convinced him of the futility of such manœuvres, he still slackened his traces by way of protest at the more imposing park enclosures. He had a most affectionate reverence for his colleague "Prince," and refused to eat or sleep unless lodged in the same stable. Indeed, the distress of both when they were separated was quite touching.

Hunter's love for horses is shown in this fragment. It led him to look askance on the bicycle and the motor car, meet representatives of the "mechanickal arts and merchandize," which Bacon tells us characterise the old age of a State. The tour was an unqualified success, and the only diary record of note regarding it is a story, related at Ullapool, of a pointer trained not only to bring salmon gingerly out of the stake nets, but to kill all the dog-fish entangled therein. On his return from this delightful trip he received Lord Lytton's acknowledgment of the first two volumes of the "Imperial Gazetteer." In conveying it the Private Secretary added :—

From MR. G. A. BATTEN.

*August 16, 1879.*

I thoroughly sympathise with your spelling difficulties, for I have always been an apostle of scientific transliteration of Indian names. . . . In preaching your doctrines I have always endeavoured to enforce them by pointing out how easy they are in practice, so much so that I have taught the whole of them to several persons in one lesson of ten minutes' duration. The Government of India have not treated you well in this respect, having allowed their own specific orders to be disregarded by every Philistine secretary or provincial authority wedded to "natural spelling," and hating reform. In a recent visit to Japan, I found that a similar controversy had been going on, but there good sense prevailed, and the transliteration of Japanese into Roman character follows exactly your rules.

During the winter of 1879-80, Hunter again came prominently before the public as a speaker. His theme was India, which he knew as no man living knew it. In the first of a course of lectures, delivered at the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, he stood up as a champion of our rule against a school of politicians who regard its history less as the record of a noble but still imperfect work than as one stained with initial wrongdoing and marked by a series of gigantic blunders. In telling



his audience "What England has done for India," he said that he had often amused himself by imagining what a Hindu of the last century would think of the present condition of his country were he privileged to revisit it. He would see thousands of square miles of jungle turned into a garden, fever-haunted swamps the site of healthy and well-drained cities, mountain walls scaled by the railway, and rivers which had formed a barrier between provinces or desolated the country with their floods spanned by bridges or tapped by canals. The visitor would be still more surprised by the security in which the people lived—by the fact that native states, which in his day were in a position of jealous isolation broken only by merciless wars, were now bound together by road and railway, post and telegraph; and by the appearance everywhere of courts of law, schools and hospitals. He concluded with a vigorous plea for justice to the Britons who were giving their best years to a task never before essayed by an imperial race. Then, as if he was conscious that he had spoken in too optimistic a strain, he filled in the shadows of the panorama. His second discourse was on "What England has yet to do for India,"—the chronic poverty of the people and the financial difficulties attending the attempt to give an Oriental empire all the machinery of a first-class European State. The remedies suggested were a far larger employment of the people themselves in the administration of their own affairs, greater economy in the management of the army, and free recourse to direct taxation. But he showed that the improvidence of the masses themselves was at the root of the evils from which they suffered, and that reform must begin in the lower strata. These lectures were fully reported by the press on both sides of the Border, thanks to the intervention of Hunter's old friend, Sir George Birdwood. Most of the leading journals devoted special articles to the conclusions drawn by the speaker, and the impression made was profound and lasting. Hunter received by every post letters from men of all shades of opinion full of sympathy for his aims and gratitude for the light thrown on a subject of which the public were grossly ignorant. At the suggestion of many of these correspondents, he was led to republish these lectures in book form. "England's Work in India," which appeared in December,



increased the impression made by these utterances.<sup>1</sup> They probably inspired the new Viceroy of India, the Marquis of Ripon, to introduce a measure of local self-government throughout the Empire, and the steps that followed, with the object of giving Indians a larger share of the sweets of office, were prompted by Hunter's fearless advocacy.<sup>2</sup>

The attention which these Edinburgh discourses commanded led the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to invite him to deliver a lecture in that city on Indian finance. He complied on the 12th December, and thereby raised a storm which probably exercised a sinister influence on his professional prospects. Beginning with the axiom that reforms in the administration of India were required by two new forces of tremendous power—the opinion of the British public and that which had grown with education in the East—he indicated the most pressing. These were a reorganisation of the public accounts and of the import tariff. The former no longer represented the changed condition of Indian finance. The Imperial Government carried on vast and complicated operations in trade and manufacture, and items under these heads still swelled both debit and credit sides of the national balance sheet. And attempts had been made to assimilate the form of accounts to those employed at home, in disregard of the fact

<sup>1</sup> "England's Work in India," by W. W. Hunter, C.I.E., LL.D. Smith, Elder & Co., 1881.

<sup>2</sup> This proposal excited a good deal of controversy. One of Hunter's opponents told in the *Scotsman* a story far too good to be allowed to rest in oblivion:—"As to Dr. Hunter's recommendation that moderately paid natives should be substituted for many of the highly paid civil servants, permit me to relate another anecdote which I have heard. A native judge, who had served a long time, and been highly respected both by his fellow-countrymen and his English superiors, was at length pensioned off. His superior, when conveying to him this intelligence, also said, 'How does it happen, Ram Sing, that you have always been respected both by your own countrymen and by us, and that none of the natives have got up stories against you, as they do against almost every other native in a good position?' 'Well, sir,' said Ram Sing, 'since I am leaving the service I may tell you. My countrymen don't believe in judicial purity, and whenever I had a case to try I was bribed by both sides. If I had refused the bribes, each party would only have believed that I was more highly bribed by the other. I then examined the case to the best of my ability, and decided accordingly to law. And you know, sir, that very few of my decisions have ever been reversed. After I had decided, I sent for the loser and gave him back his bribe; the winner's I kept for my own benefit. The latter said nothing, because he had gained his cause.' And this is one of the best specimens of a class whom Dr. Hunter would place in a position of trust!"



that the exchange value of the Indian currency unit had fallen by 14 per cent. Thus chaos was produced in India and misapprehension at home. The antidote lay in differentiating between statements to be presented to Parliament and accounts kept for the exigencies of the Indian Exchequer. Still more pressing was the need for a thorough remodelling of the import duties. Hunter traced their history from the days when his uncle, Mr. James Wilson, imposed a general tax of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for fiscal purposes. He showed how the tremendous weight possessed by Lancashire in the Lower House had forced the interests of British financiers in India into opposition to the industrial interests of the Indian people. The cry that duties on Manchester cottons were protective had led to the gradual exemption of products of that class. Hunter protested strongly against the narrow and selfish spirit which left India to maintain a costly customs establishment, while it deprived her tariff of the very articles which enabled the expense to be met. The remedy suggested was a daring one, and proved that Hunter was far in advance of his time in grasping the fact that mutual advantages and common interests alone can keep an Empire together. It was the abolition of all customs duties on British goods imported into India, and of those levied upon tea and coffee exported thence to English ports. He proved that the immediate loss would be trifling, while both countries would reap vast and direct gains from absolutely unfettered trade. This scheme is worthy of close consideration at the present time. While serving as Collector of Customs in Calcutta a few years ago, I became convinced that great hardship was inflicted by the import tariff, and that moral cowardice as great was displayed in the persistent sacrifice of the interests of Indian cotton-mill owners to those of their Lancashire competitors. These evils admit of amelioration, if not of radical cure, by treatment on the lines put forward twenty years ago by Hunter. His lecture was as fully reported as its predecessors, and *The Times* devoted a powerful leading article to the necessity of a root and branch reform in Indian finance. Again letters of hearty assent poured in from all sides. I select two, because they are eminently characteristic of their writers. Professor J. Stuart Blackie wrote thus :—



FROM PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

[N. D.]

I have read your account of the doings of the Manchester men not without sorrow. It is the old, old story. We are governing India as we governed Ireland, on the narrow principles of commerce. All trade is selfish, all politicians are servile, and the weaker goes to the wall. You talk of "touching the conscience of England," but that is a peculiar kind of conscience, composed of Roman toughness and Carthaginian greed, and made pleasant by a large seasoning of Christian phraseology. The road to John Bull's conscience is through his pocket, and it is by no means easy to penetrate. *England is the only country in which poverty is a crime.*

Mr. John Bright's opinion was equally emphatic :—

December 20, 1879.

I read the report of your lecture with much interest. I do not think your plan very practicable. I would come to the same or an equally good result by a different method. When Sir Louis Mallet was in India, the year the Prince was there, he and others in authority partly arranged a scheme which, within three years, might have opened the Indian ports and closed the customs-houses, with the exception of what was necessary for the collection of the duty on salt. All this has been defeated, partly by the famine, but more distinctly by the policy of the Indian Government and the Cabinet at home. With this Government in power there is small chance of our tea duty being abolished, and without that your tea cannot come in free, for I do not think your idea of giving up the duty on Indian tea to the Inland Revenue will or can be entertained by Parliament. The fact is, and surely it must be clear to you with your Indian experience, that, with a Government like that of Lord Lytton in connection with the present policy at home, nothing can be done for India. Its revenue and its true interests are sacrificed to what, if it be not a crime, is a craze, and until this system, so mad or so criminal, is got rid of there can be no hope for India. I suspect we are approaching a great calamity in connection with our Indian responsibilities. The men now in power seem blind.

As Hunter might have foreseen, his audacious attack on our national hypocrisy and proneness to trample on the interests of others, brought down upon him the full vials of official wrath. He told Mr. W. E. Forster some of the incidents of a controversy which caused him acute pain and probably inflicted some injury on his career as a public servant.



TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.

February 4, 1880.

For some time past I have been engaged, in concert with Sir George Balfour and Sir William Robinson (formerly Acting Governor of Madras), in examining the Indian accounts since 1840, with a view to a complete comparison of them with the revenue and expenditure at present. When I was about to publish the first results, I received a communication of a violent, and, as I think, a most unjustifiable nature from the India Office with regard to my address at Birmingham. I had hoped that, on a fuller consideration, the Under-Secretary of State (Sir Louis M. Mallet) would have withdrawn from the position which he then hastily took up. But after further correspondence, I find that I am quite free to write or lecture as long as I praise the Government, but that any criticism of its measures in India is accepted as an unwarranted attack. I have decided that, as I cannot speak my opinions freely and honestly, I will not speak at all. It is only the question of a little patience and waiting, but meanwhile I have had to decline the invitations of the Chambers of Commerce at Manchester and Newcastle to address them. I do not think that under these circumstances it would be proper for me to write to *The Times* in answer to your courteous request of last December; but efforts are being made through Sir William Robinson to induce the India Office to frame a statement which will give you materials for comparing Indian finance in times past and present. I exceedingly regret this result of a correspondence which I had hoped would place the true facts before the country, in the interests of neither one party nor another, but simply of the truth. For the present I have no alternative.

Some explanation is given of the feeling excited in certain quarters by Hunter's impugnement of Indian finances in a letter written by one who had assisted him in the campaign.

FROM SIR ARTHUR HOBHOUSE.

May 11, 1880.

I don't think that there is anything in the tone or tenor of your Birmingham address to which a reasonable official could object; but then Indian officials are *genus irritabile*, unused to the fresh air of criticism and feeling it keenly. As to the violence with which you have been assailed, it has been much in the air lately, and all who have ventured to find fault with Government in England or India have had their share. But I believe it to be part, and an inevitable part, of Imperial policy, and the result of a belief that that policy is as triumphant in the country as it is in London clubs and coteries. Among other healthy effects, the late elections will clear the air of insolence.



As in the case of "The Indian Mussulmans," Hunter saw his teachings enforced by the stern logic of events. In February 1880 Sir John Strachey, Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council, presented his budget, showing a surplus of £119,000. Three months later came the appalling news that the balance-sheet was erroneous, and that a deficit of £900,000 had been discovered. The effect of this announcement was heightened by a change of Ministry. At the general elections in April the country declared itself unmistakably against Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism, and the Liberals returned to power under Mr. Gladstone's guidance. Acrimonious debates on the financial imbroglio ensued in Parliament, and Sir John Strachey resigned his office, quitting India under a cloud, which gratitude for thirty-eight years of splendid service ought soon to have dissipated. In discussing the causes of this untoward event with General Sir Richard Strachey, Hunter suggested that it was due to a practice, which had caused untold confusion after the Mutiny, of treating unliquidated vouchers relating to war expenditure as cash in hand. The General replied :—

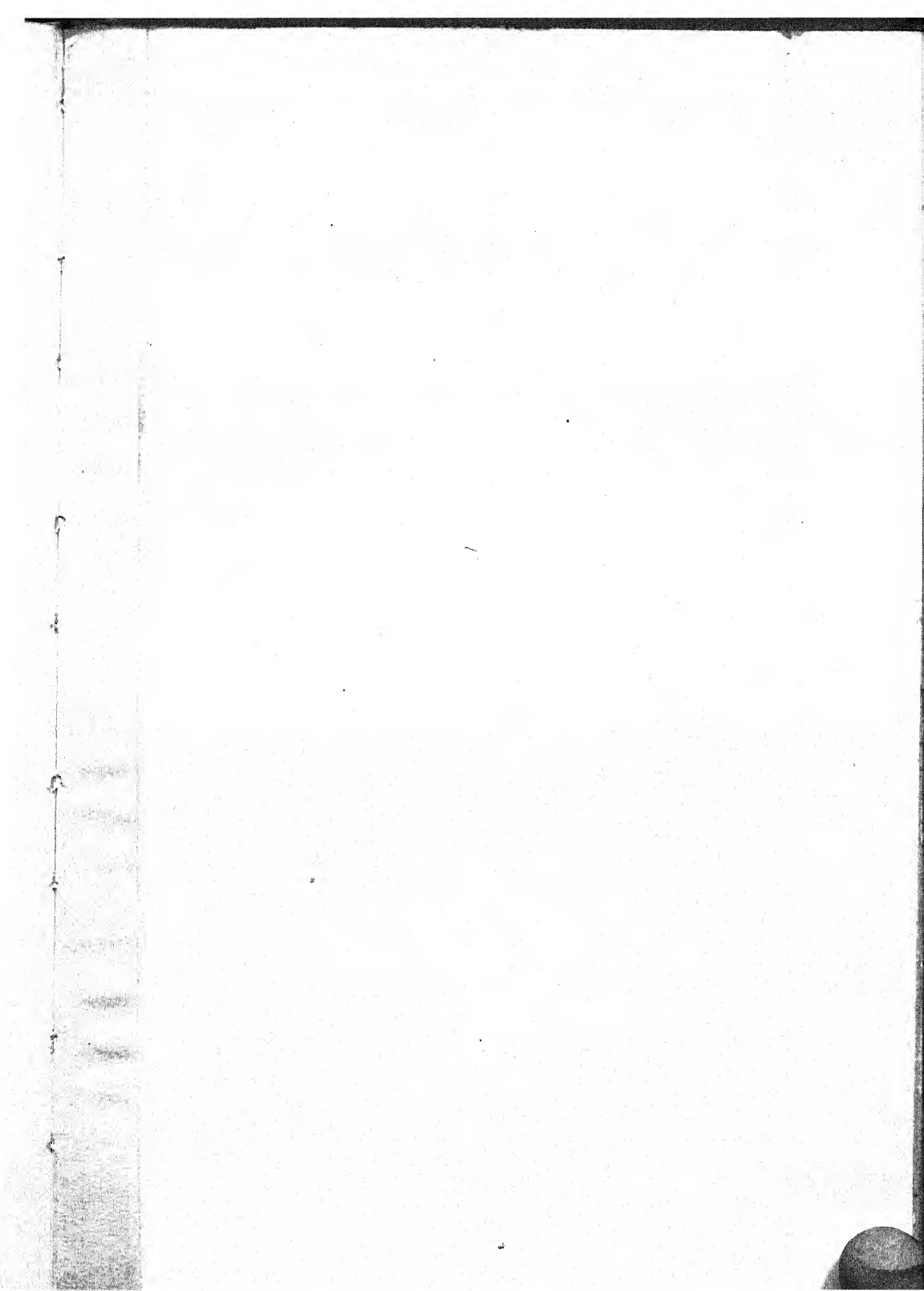
[N. D.]

I have just got my brother's minute giving explanations. The truth simply is that the accounts of military expenditure in Afghanistan for the last year or so were quite misleading, and that a very large sum was left outstanding of the existence of which no one had been given any hint. It is an unfortunate concurrence of accidents that turned the Tories out just as the blunder was being discovered; otherwise the dirty linen would have been washed at home, and no one would have been the worse.

In the middle of June Hunter went to London to preside over a meeting of the English Spelling Reform Association, a movement in which he naturally took a leading part. On the 28th of that month he entered into an agreement with Messrs. Trübner for the publication of the "Imperial Gazetteer," to complete which he had obtained a seven months' extension of his stay in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Then, as if he had not enough on his hands already, he visited Mr. Brian Hodgson at Wimbledon in order to arrange with him for the preparation of a catalogue of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Under-Secretary of State for India, dated 24th April 1880.









*William Wilson Hunter.*  
*Act. 41.*



Sanscrit MS. collected in Nepal.<sup>1</sup> He returned to Edinburgh on the 19th, and a few days later drove his wife and children to Penymore House, near Inverary, which he took for the autumn. It stands close to a good anchorage, and he seized the opportunity of indulging in a pursuit which he loved next to driving. A fifteen-ton yacht was hired at Millport, and the Hunters had many a delightful cruise in the narrow waters of the west coast. There was just the spice of danger which makes yachting so pleasurable. On 4th August the skipper, though a tried pilot, ran the craft on a rock off Bute.

We lay all night in great discomfort, and some danger of the yacht breaking up when the tide rose. This morning, 5th August, we were received by the country people with all the honours due to shipwrecked mariners. A dozen stalwart natives got the yacht off with two anchors, but she again grounded, knocked a hole in her bottom, and filled. We fetched a carpenter from Kilchattan Bay, who patched up the leak with sheepskin, canvas and white-lead, and when the tide ran in she floated. We beached her, spent the night at a farmhouse, and were driven across Bute to Rothesay, returning home thence on 6th August by the *Lord of the Isles*. All my clothes and papers were ruined by the salt water when the yacht filled.

The story of "England's Work for India" attracted an ever-widening circle of readers. It even engrossed the attention of one whose opinion Hunter especially valued. Lord Rosebery wrote in the following year:—

June 28, 1881.

It may please you to know that Mr. Gladstone brought your little book on India with him to the Durdans the other day. He seemed greatly delighted with it, reading it with the greatest attention.

Of adverse criticism there was enough and to spare. Hunter's recognition of the benefits derived by India from her connection with this country was highly distasteful to those who regarded the union as one between the galley-slave and his cannon-ball. Mr. H. M. Hyndman, who was a leader of that school, made an oblique attack on the discriminating champion of our rule in the *Nineteenth Century*, and Hunter defended his position, objecting at the same time to the general tone of denunciation adopted by Mr. Hyndman. The latter replied:—

<sup>1</sup> The catalogue was published by Trübner in 1881.



From MR. H. M. HYNDMAN.

*November 13, 1880.*

I have read with respect and deep interest your lectures on India. I do not wonder that, forming part of a great service, you should defend the able and thoroughly well-intentioned men who are your fellow-workers and your friends. But surely a man of your capacity must sometimes stop to ask himself such questions as these:—How is it that the Moghul Emperors could raise £60,000,000 a year for 170 years without exhausting the country, while we raise only £34,000,000 a year, and do exhaust it, even on your showing? How is it that in our territory population increases up to 243 per square mile, pressing hard upon the limits of the lowest subsistence, while the population of the native States amounts only to eighty-nine per square mile? Yet once more, how is it that, with all the enormous increase of railway and road communications, trade increases in a lessening progression, period for period? Of course I am well aware that there are many drawbacks to our rule besides the drain of fortunes to England, just as Irish absenteeism is not the only ill that afflicts Ireland. But that is with India at the bottom of the mischief. I am confident that you, as well as myself, have but one aim—to make our government of India that success which it certainly is not at present. This attempt to squash into twenty years the work of centuries has been a failure, and I cannot but think that if we were talking over the matter quietly together, without the fear or the hope of publicity before our eyes, you would admit as much. Let me hope that some day when you are in London you will give me the honour of a call. As I am quite determined to break up the present mismanagement and to reduce the home drain so far as one humble individual can effect that object, it is quite possible that we shall come into collision again. I can only say that, as a student of India, I am and shall always feel myself in your debt.

*December 22, 1880.*

It seems to me, I must say, that most of our mistakes in judging of the present condition of India arise from an incapacity to appreciate (1) the disintegrating effect of one civilisation acting through foreign agents upon another, and (2) the misfortune that our so-called science of political economy leaks at every seam, and yet we sail along in it merrily. As to the latter, what utter bunkum is daily written about capital! Colonel Stanley the other day, talking the talk of the school, gave it as many virtues as charity. Yet as you and I know perfectly well, capital only means that the upper classes or the superior races have laid hold of the greater part of the circulating medium, and are therefore better able to apply labour in one direction rather than in another to their own profit. If we once begin to go to the root of the matter, and consider how far the population of this planet is ahead of its supply of food and



raw material, and how close to starvation many live everywhere, we then see what rubbish is often given forth as wisdom in the name of the modern fictions "demand and supply" and "freedom of contract." Applying this to India, I should contend that the loan of our capital under the conditions it has been lent is ruinous. On the whole, the amount removed from the country—there being no virgin soil to exploit—is more than it can bear. However, to go into that discussion and the further one about the law of the increase of population in varying conditions of wealth, would lead you to think me a most troublesome and unfortunate correspondent.

Mr. Hyndman's pessimism was rivalled, if not exceeded, by that of Mark Pattison,<sup>1</sup> who wrote in the following year:—

*August 12, 1881.*

A condition of things in which population has actually overtaken food is one which illustrates the past of Arabic history, *e.g.*, the disappearance of the great empires of Nineveh, Babylon, and Tigranocerta. . . . The moral of your book is that bad government which leads to depopulation is better for India than the good government of England which has induced a surfeit of useless mouths. How do the millions of black people—243 to the square mile—differ from a flight of locusts, who eat up all the earth brings forth? We kill the locusts all we can, and we keep alive the black mammal. What for? If English good government in India is continued long enough, it must end in the creation of a population for which there will not be standing room on the surface of the ground. Can such a result be regarded as a gain to humanity? Schooling is, as we see in our own country, a poor test of civilisation; but what can be the value of a man in a country where, out of a population of two hundred millions, only two millions of children ever attend school?

A correspondent of a different category was the Rev. F. Barham Zincke,<sup>2</sup> who spent a week with the Hunters at the beginning of December, and wrote from Wherstead Vicarage, near Ipswich, after his return:—

[N. D.]

Nothing could be more pleasant than the contrast between ordinary life in East Suffolk and the time I have just spent in Edinburgh. Here I have not met in forty years a native who ever made a joke, or repeated a joke, or understood a joke; and everything is so deadly quiet that, as they say out on the prairies, a man might hear himself thinking, if, of course, the process were ever attempted in this Beotia.

<sup>1</sup> The famous Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford (1811–84).

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Foster Barham Zincke, antiquary (1811–93).



On March 21, the Hunters quitted their beautiful home in Douglas Crescent for the Craiglockart Hydropathic Establishment, which was to be their headquarters until their return to India. Here the finishing touches were given to the "Statistical Account of Assam," which was published by Trübner in May.<sup>1</sup> A far greater work was also approaching its consummation—the "Imperial Gazetteer of India," the prospectus of which was issued in March, and three volumes, making five in all, in the following month. Through the good offices of the present Duke of Devonshire, who was Mr. Gladstone's Secretary of State for India, her late Majesty was induced to accept the dedication.<sup>2</sup> The issue of the completed volumes to subscribers followed, and elicited the following letter from Sir George Birdwood:—

May 27, 1881.

You have indeed raised to yourself a monument more lasting than bronze. As a gazetteer it is unapproachable, but throughout it is much more than that. There is everywhere in it the impress of yourself, and the work will be enduring. I most heartily congratulate you, and I will do everything in my power to emphasise and extend the appreciation of your splendid achievement. In my work on Indian Art, which will appear next book season, I will state in the preface the lasting obligation under which it places every Englishman interested in any subject connected with India. I almost feel it an impertinence to express to you this heartfelt praise of your book, there is such an immeasurable distance between us. But I am sure that the noblest trees of the forest are made happier by the little birds singing among their branches, and it is with this thought in my mind that I write to congratulate and thank you on the completion of your great enterprise.

A foretaste was given of this crowning fruit of twelve years' toil in an article on India, which was the longest and most notable contribution to the ninth volume of the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Like the other Indian sections in that work, it flowed from Hunter's prolific pen, and commanded wide attention by its graphic power and the entire absence of political bias.

He retained to the last a passionate love of poetry in spite of the deadening influence of the facts and figures which he was

<sup>1</sup> "A Statistical Account of Assam," two vols. royal 8vo, with maps. Trübner, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Mr R. H. Hobart, dated 26th March 1881.



fated to manipulate. He especially admired Sir Edwin Arnold's gift of rendering the great thoughts buried in Indian epics into English verse. The "Light of Asia" has not yet dazzled the West, but Sir Edwin's translations were highly appreciated by his fellow-worker in the Indian field. The fact was mentioned by Mr. Trübner to the poet, who wrote as follows:—

FROM SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

June 21, 1881.

You wish to know what materials I used in translating the five books of the Mahabharata. I had by me a special text of the Swayarshana, which I got lithographed in my college at Puna long ago, and the text of the edition of the great epic published in Calcutta in 1834. My version is rather a paraphrase than a close translation, but it goes pretty faithfully, notwithstanding, line by line. What struck me was the deep humanity of these two fragments, and the lesson of unselfish piety which they seemed to impart. If you approve, I am glad indeed; it is *laudari laudato*. I am here in a lovely Highland valley under a sentence of Sir William Gull, who convicted me of overwork, editorial and literary, and banished me without appeal from Fleet Street.

While the remaining three volumes of the "Imperial Gazetteer" were going through the press, Hunter found respite from the avalanche of proof-sheets in the breezy moors of Yorkshire. He spent a few days at Marske, the residence of Mr. D'Arcy Hutton, and there met Mark Pattison, who was deeply interested in the chequered story of England's work for India. He enjoyed, too, a three days' ride through the Dale country, mounting wooded slopes to the moors, then cantering through wild solitudes devoted to sheep and grouse, plunging anon into rich valleys each with its sparkling trout-stream, and drinking in health and exhilaration at every pore.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of June Mrs. Hunter came up to London with her son Broughton, who had to undergo an operation to improve his eyesight. Cocaine was unknown in those days, and the father's anxiety as to the issue of the ordeal called a truce to literary work. After its success was assured he returned to the "Imperial Gazetteer." The first man of mark to acknowledge a presentation copy was the Premier, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who wrote from Downing Street:—

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter, dated 5th June 1881.



July 2, 1881.

I am somewhat concerned to think that my acknowledgment of benefit received from your former books should have had to do with procuring me the gift of the important work received this day, which I owe to your kindness. All I can say is that I feel highly sensible of the honour you have done me, and that I hope to profit greatly by this distinguished product of your talent, research, and assiduity.

Ere the close of July Hunter was able to announce its public issue to his employers.<sup>1</sup> The "Imperial Gazetteer of India" was the sublimated essence of a hundred volumes of Statistical Accounts relating to the various provinces, which had been in process of compilation under his guidance for twelve years. It had cost somewhat less than the £13,000 allotted by the Government of India, and was finished well within the limit of four years and seven months assigned to the task. In no other country had a survey of anything like the same magnitude been conducted with such exact punctuality and with so small an outlay. Seventeen years were taken up in marshalling the result of the inquiries in Egypt made at the beginning of the century by Denon and his French colleagues. The "Statistical Survey of Bengal," which was ordered by the East India Company in 1807, cost £30,000, and was never brought to a conclusion. Hunter broke the long spell of disappointment and failure which hung over the efforts of the Indian Government towards rendering an account of its stewardship. By a rare combination of qualities he accomplished a feat which was a necessary complement to the creation of an Indian Empire. He revealed the vast fabric to his countrymen, and enabled them to perform their trust under the guidance of the fullest knowledge. The keystone of the Gazetteer was the article "India." It was the first attempt ever made to show how her varied races had been built up, and to trace the influx of the successive waves of invasion which swept over the peninsula. For the ancient history Hunter had recourse to translations of contemporary Sanskrit annals, and the story of medieval India was told from Ferishta, from Arab geographers and Persian

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Government of India, dated 25th July 1881. "The Imperial Gazetteer of India," 9 vols. royal 8vo. Trübner, 1881. A second edition in 14 volumes was published in 1886.



historians. Nor were his expositions of physical geography less admirable. It is difficult to invest such a subject with the faintest flavour of interest, but Hunter's literary gift was more than equal to the task. The reader is able to seize the kaleidoscopic aspect of the hill, forest, and fertile plain. He obtains a biography of the great rivers, and follows each in its twofold character of renewer and destroyer, from its mountain cradle to its union with the encircling ocean. The same power is displayed when the struggle between the blind forces of nature and those of organised society is depicted. The British Empire is seen as the latest stage in a vast gigantic organic growth, its foundations laid in the contest between the maritime Powers for the rich commerce of the East, and its fabric raised slowly, with many mistakes, much blind groping at higher ideals, until it shelters a seventh of the population of the globe. An attention as minute is given to these subject myriads. Their manner of life, their customs and aspirations are sketched with the unerring touch of one who knew and sympathised with them. And the interests of the ruling race were not overlooked. The Gazetteer showed how promising a field was India for British capital, and how the two Empires, shoulder to shoulder, might defy the growing competition of Europe and America in nearly every field of human industry. It is not surprising that a work so comprehensive and yet so lucid should have evoked pæans of applause in the press. *The Times* gave it two lengthy notices from the pen of Professor E. H. Palmer, a profound Orientalist, whose tragic death still lingers in the public memory,<sup>1</sup> and the leading journals of every shade of opinion united in pronouncing that the compiler had laid his country under a lasting obligation.

It was of course inevitable that so great an enterprise, involving, as it did, correspondence with fifteen distinct administrations and an army of inferior agents, should have been attended with a certain degree of friction. We have seen

<sup>1</sup> Edward Henry Palmer (1840-82) was a linguist who excited Professor E. B. Cowell's delight by his exhaustless vocabulary in Arabic. He became Lord Almoner's Professor at Cambridge, and translated the Kuran. In 1882, during Arabi Pasha's revolt in Egypt, he was sent by our Government to secure the allegiance of the Badawin Shaikhs, and was basely murdered by them.



something of the obstacles encountered in India from the sloth bred of an enervating climate, and the hatred of superiority and reform shown by all bureaucracies. Hunter fared but little better at home. At a time when his name was flitting on the lips of men everywhere, he was treated with neglect, and worse than neglect, by officials who should have esteemed it an honour to be associated with him. Of this no trace is found in the *Gazetteer* itself, but the sorely-tried author's private correspondence tells a very different tale. "Thanks for your very kind letter," he wrote to Mrs. Hunter on 29th July—

I need it. The discouragement and slights proceeding from pure ignorance which I have had to endure make me wearied and miserable before half the day is over. . . . I keep a smiling face with a very heavy heart, for I intend to win. It is easy enough to gain great success by my works so far as the opinion of the public, the publishers, and the competent critic is concerned. But it will give me a bitter pleasure to win a victory over the cynical ignorance of these poor tapeworms who have eaten into the vitals of so many able men. I must bear them in order to be able to completely despise them. We shall see. . . . Remember you must not give the faintest sign that I have official worries of any sort. My maxim in such cases is a smiling face and a bitter heart. That is how I conquer these shallow idlers.



## CHAPTER XVI

### A SIGNAL TRIUMPH

HUNTER's long sojourn in Europe was now drawing to a close, and he was about to return to duty alone. The children had all reached an age when the climate of the tropics is positively harmful, and education is a question of paramount importance. After much anxious thought he resolved to leave them under their mother's care at Weimar, which has excellent schools for both sexes. There was another motive for setting up house in the sleepy little German capital. Weimar, as he told me in after years, is well nigh the sole survivor of the minor courts which studded the Fatherland ere the map of Europe was remodelled by Napoleon's iconoclasm. Heinrich Heine said, "People may talk of the blessings of poverty, but give me champagne and the Order of the Bath." Hunter had the same bias towards sumptuous surroundings and the romance of ancient ceremonial. On 10th September 1881 the family bade farewell to Craiglockhart and journeyed with their friend Miss Flora Stephenson to Weimar. The following letter gives the impressions by the way, and those produced by the chosen home of Goethe:—

TO MRS. D'ARCY HUTTON.

*September 24, 1881.*

We had a bracing voyage from Leith to Hamburg. As we passed Heligoland at dawn on the third day I saw the Union Jack hoisted for the last time on British soil till I reach the burning rocks of Aden.<sup>1</sup> At Hamburg we arrived just in time for the autumn manœuvres of the North German Army. The old Emperor, with his eighty-five years and snow-white moustaches, sat for hours erect in the saddle, and then came on by train to open a flower show. The whole city was gay with flags. But, though the Kaiser is personally liked, Hamburg resents the loss of her independence, and every arrangement was made to secure

<sup>1</sup> Heligoland was ceded to Germany in 1890.



unbroken speed for his Majesty's drosky through the streets. At one corner a mounted policeman's horse reared over and caused a moment's stoppage. Forthwith a whisper ran along the dense avenue of citizens that a Nihilist had been arrested in the act of firing at the monarch.

We entered the Hartz Mountains from their northern fringe, and after five delightful days among the forests and valleys we emerged on the railway system of Thuringia at their outer edge. Our little caravan of two carriages was like the forward march of a primitive Aryan family in quest of a new settlement, with the father, mother, children, guest, and servants complete—in all ten persons. One night was spent on the very summit of the Brocken, the highest mountain of Central Germany, but after all only 3400 feet above sea level. Next morning we were wakened at five o'clock by a clanging bell to see the sun rise. Long lagoons of light stretched across the eastern sky, and gradually faded from the richest carmine into a fainter pink as the orb projected itself upwards in a sharply defined disc of fire. Day after day we rolled on among these ravines in bright sunshine, putting up at some lonely forest inn for our midday halt and nightly rest. Each of our coachmen and horses became an old friend, with a history of his own, and it seemed as if we had closed a distinct chapter in our lives when we finally issued from the forest on the open country with its trim cultivation, its cities, and railways. Weimar is a delightful old-fashioned town, consisting chiefly of the Grand Duke's castle, park and the houses of his state officers, and a big church where the women sit by themselves below and the men in two galleries above. The court bookseller is too patriotic a German to keep a single French novel in stock; the theatre opens at six and closes at nine, playing classical opera to a refined audience, chiefly consisting of spinsters, at a subscription charge for the best places of one shilling and ninepence. We arrived at the nick of time to succeed to the villa of a lady who has retired from the little court. It opens upon the park and has a garden of its own, and at this season the walls are ablaze with the most gorgeous of Virginia creepers. The surroundings are like a dream. The dwelling which the Grand Duke has given to Liszt is but a minute's walk from ours, and the whole place breathes Goethe and Schiller. We shall buy some of the late owner's furniture, and the most cherished of our household gods are already on their way from Scotland. The sweet calm of the place has already fallen upon me, and after four years of continuous work I feel at rest.

After a month at slumberous Weimar came the dreaded parting. Hunter started for India on 10th October, and wrote to Mrs. Hunter while speeding to Venice:—



EGEE, *October 11, 1881.*

I was quite overcome by your kindness and the sympathy of the dear children at the station. I looked out for you when the train turned the corner, but, alas, the platform was empty. Indeed it was so far off that you were invisible, you dear group. I cherished the sweet flowers that Mabel gave me, and now part of them repose safely in my pocket-book, the rest I wore at my button-hole till I arrived here at midnight.

Two days later the lonely exile reached Venice, "a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak, so quiet, so bereft of all but her loveliness," and embarked on the *Sumatra*, bound for Alexandria. His heart was full of misgivings for the future, and events showed that they were fully justified. For Indian high places have ever been a hotbed of "hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness." Voltaire said sarcastically of the eighteenth-century discord: "To relate the various feuds of the Europeans in India would take a larger work than the Encyclopædia. One cannot sufficiently extend the limits of science or confine the bounds of human weakness."<sup>1</sup> A contemporary English traveller was as unfavourably impressed by the tone of Calcutta society:—

The infernal spirit of dissension perpetually stalks abroad, and the joys of social intercourse, the ties of consanguinity, the endearments of private friendship are swallowed up in the undistinguishing rage of all-destructive faction."<sup>2</sup>

A century later the same spirit still held sway, nor is it extinct at the present day. Now in a country governed by parties the struggle between the "ins" and "outs" is natural enough, and the personalities to which it gives rise are *de bonne guerre* and are forgotten when a respite comes from the turmoil of political life. Why then do passions more virulent and inveterate rage in an Empire which knows not representative institutions? Sir Richard Temple, who has suffered more than most men from calumny, holds the perversity of human nature to blame, but the cause of this curious state of things

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by the Rev. J. Long in No. xxxvi. *Calcutta Review*.

<sup>2</sup> "The Genuine Memoirs of Asiaticus," London, 1785. The writer was Philip Stanhope of the 1st Dragoon Guards, who went to India in 1774, a victim of disappointed love, and returned in 1778 after spending a few months in Calcutta and three years in the service of the Nawab of Arcot.



is less obvious. A European's temper and nervous system are apt to degenerate in the tropics. With a small Service which has a few splendid prizes and many blanks, it is inevitable that those who aspire to well-paid office remote from the heat, the dust, the glare of the plains, should cordially detest colleagues whom their instinct detects as possible rivals. A civilian who is content to rise by slow degrees in the "regular line" may earn his pension without making an enemy. But the moment an official shows independence or energy and brains above the common he becomes the butt of misrepresentation. He is branded in Secretariat slang as "unsafe," tactless, or eccentric. His morals, his temper, and even his sanity are impugned, and every base art that jealousy and self-interest can prompt is brought into play against him. Viceroys are but men. They arrive in India in happy ignorance of these intrigues, and too often fall into the hands of wirepullers. Thus many a gallant spirit has been broken, many a career has been wrecked which might have reflected lustre on the Empire. Now Hunter had committed the initial crime of beating every competitor in the examination which gave him entrance to the Civil Service. He had added to his guilt by achieving a European reputation and by bringing a task of immense difficulty to a brilliantly successful issue. He was known to be ambitious, and his gifts marked him out for high employment. What wonder then that his enemies should have taken advantage of the prolonged absence in Europe to prepare a crushing humiliation for him? His letters shall tell how the conspiracy was defeated by his steadfastness and acumen.

While steaming down the Adriatic in the *Sumatra* he wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

October 15, 1881.

The Grant-Duffs are to join our party at Brindisi, and among the little group of Venice passengers is Mr. Panioty, the Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy. He says that Lord Ripon<sup>1</sup> is a just and laborious man, kind when you know him, and exact in business. I don't see a nest anywhere for myself, and I look forward to a hard time in India. One feels, even from the talk of

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis of Ripon succeeded Lord Lytton as Viceroy in February 1880.



an uncovenanted official like Panioty, how keen must be the jealousy of one's compeers. But if I have health, they cannot destroy my peace of mind. . . . I literally expect nothing but pain and envy for all that I have done at home.

At Suez the traveller embarked on the *Rome*, and his next letter touches a weak point in the transit arrangements of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

October 24.

She moves through the sea like a Behemoth, not rising on the waves but plodding through them. The result is that her ports have to be constantly shut. The saloons are decorated with finely carved walnut panels, executed by the Italian artist who recently adorned Rothschild's house in the same way. But the architect has declined to spoil his gilded roof with punkah fittings; so here we are in the Red Sea in October, in a magnificent ship, but without the first necessity of the climate. We perspire whilst we admire, and some give vent to their feelings in profanity. We have had one or two hurricanes which cooled the air for a time. They lash the sea with a wild tumult, throwing the waves right over the highest part of our fore-deck and howling so that no voice can reach you from a couple of yards distance. Then they subside like a child wearied of boisterous play.

He reached Bombay on 21st October, and after ascertaining the progress made in the local Gazetteer, crossed India by rail in time to announce his arrival at Calcutta to Broughton.

November 7, 1881.

The above anagram means that my address, henceforth, is the United Service Club, Calcutta, where I arrived safely this morning after three and a half days' travelling from Bombay, of which sixty hours were spent in the train. It was a hot, dusty journey, but I enjoyed myself, reading and writing the whole way and eating little thin-skinned oranges. When I reached Calcutta this morning at sunrise I felt very lonely. I was returning to a city where I had once a home and many friends, but where I have now neither hearthstone nor acquaintance. When I drove up to the Club I was received by a sleepy servant with the usual air of indifference which such people adopt towards an unknown member. The club was very full, he said, and no good rooms were available. As he was vouchsafing this unpleasant news in a drowsy voice the head servant happened to pass. Presently he turned and salaamed in a most respectful way, and asked if I did not remember him.



Then he explained that he was the brother of the man whose life I had saved. In point of fact his brother had gone with me many years ago to Bombay, and had fallen ill of cholera at a lonely place on the west coast. I had nursed him till we arrived at a seaport with an hospital, and made him over to the doctor there, putting another servant of the same caste in charge of him, with orders not to leave him until he was decently buried, or to bring him back safe at my expense to Calcutta. He recovered, and was able to return to his home in Bengal two thousand miles away. I had forgotten all about this, but it seems that these poor people have been cherishing my name ever since. The grateful head servant made a great sensation this morning by proclaiming my arrival and my virtues, and in half-an-hour I had three charming rooms assigned to me opening out on the garden. So I take this welcome from a humble native as a good augury on my return to India.

The surroundings in his new quarters shall be next described.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*November 20, 1881.*

This is Sunday evening and I have just been hearing the Benediction very sweetly sung at the Convent Church, and a sermon by Father Lafont.<sup>1</sup> My heart is so full of you that I shall not go down to dinner, but have tea quietly in my own rooms at nine, and meantime write you a long letter. Your kind thoughtfulness has surrounded me with beautiful things. On the table in front of me is the dear old china inkbottle which has gone with us in so many wanderings since our young Suri days. Just behind it, but still within reach of my arm, is your beloved portrait—the tinted one. Beside it is Mabel's, and they make a pretty pair. That is all I allow on my writing-table, except my old black portfolio and the morocco tray for unanswered letters. . . . After five o'clock tea this afternoon Archdeacon Baly shouted to me to come to his rooms and join him in a cheroot before he went to church. This is Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday, and he showed me some very good passages in a sermon which he was about to deliver. I had been telling him that I had never heard one from an Indian chaplain which showed sympathy with natives, or made one feel more kindly towards them. He agreed, and then proved that his address was an exception to the rule.

*December 5, 1881.*

At last I can tell you something of my fate. I have been so ill-treated that I did not like to add to your other worries connected

<sup>1</sup> The Principal of St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, a profound astronomer, and a most amiable man.



with setting up a new home. But now I have beaten the cowardly plotters, beaten them flat upon the ground, with their faces in the mud, and am in a fair way to fame and fortune over their prostrate bodies. I left Venice with the plaudits of all Europe ringing in my ears, and a personal despatch in my pocket conveying the thanks of the Secretary of State. The first moment that I touched Indian soil at Aden a letter from the Government of India was placed in my hands intimating that, as my work was finished, my appointment must be considered as no longer existent, and that I was to wait in Calcutta, out of employ, till the Viceroy could take up my case. This was a cold welcome, and it opened up a vista of unpleasant contingencies; so I said nothing about it to any one, but gave up playing whist for the rest of the voyage, and devoted the time spent on cards to thinking over the position in absolute silence. I soon struck out a line of strategy which has ended in the discomfiture of my opponents, and will land me, before the week is out, a Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. I quickly perceived that the enemy who had drafted the obnoxious despatch had acted before he had mastered the case. It abolished my appointment as Director-General because the "Imperial Gazetteer" was finished. But the Resolution of the Governor-General in Council of 8th December 1871 had created the Director-Generalship, not for the Gazetteer, but for the Statistical Survey of India. The former, which held a secondary place in that Resolution, was indeed finished; but the Survey, the primary object of my appointment, was still to do over more than half of India. It would have been easy, therefore, to compel the withdrawal of the despatch, and the reconstitution of my appointment. Indeed it was hard for human frailty to resist the triumph over the jealous clique of plotters. But the silent hours saved from whist gradually suggested a better part. For, in the first place, no Government likes to be made to look foolish, and the cancelling of the despatch would have arrayed against me the Viceroy and all the Members of Council who had been misled into passing it. In the second place, I reflected that, if I insisted on my appointment being reconstituted, I should have to stick in it; while my desire was, if possible, to attain one of the great posts which lead to the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal. As an ill-treated man out of employ, the Government would have to make its proposals to me; as a man who had insisted on being maintained in his appointment, I should have to personally solicit promotion from it. So I perceived that the enemy had delivered himself into my hand. For five weeks I uttered no word, awaited the arrival of the Viceroy and the Council in Calcutta, made inquiries very silently, and gradually arranged my tactics for the moment that the return of the Government brought us to close quarters. Sir Rivers Thompson, the Member of Council in the Home Department, is a just man, and I knew if



I could make him feel he had done me wrong he would try to get me righted. So I called on him at once, and remained quite silent, with a view to his asking me what post I wanted. When he did so, I replied that, as I had been unexpectedly placed out of employ, I had not allowed myself to anticipate the action of Government until I ascertained if I had in any way forfeited its confidence. He, of course, said that I had not, and that they all felt that I had earned well of the State. So I got my opportunity, left immediately, and wrote him the enclosed letters. . . . I have beaten them—beaten them by sheer tact and good temper. It is mean, miserable work, this strife about a position which ought to have been spontaneously offered to me. I show a bold front both in society and in my letters, but I have sleepless nights, and dull, unhappy days. I can never forget the misery which this cold-hearted, envious clique have caused me. But the Viceroy is fair, if he only had time to go into the matter. Rivers Thompson is a just man too, and Baring is really trying to act as my friend. Do not fear, I shall beat them yet! I only wish I had you to encourage and comfort me, and then we might laugh at them all.

It was at this crisis of his fate that I formed a friendship with Hunter, which lasted till it was severed by death. I was invited to meet him at dinner at the United Service Club by the late Mr. Harry Lee, afterwards Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation. It was a very joyous party, and Hunter bore a conspicuous part in the flow of jest and anecdote. I was particularly struck by his boyish spirits, so rarely seen among Anglo-Indians when the rubicon of middle life has been overstepped. No one would have believed that he was in the throes of a struggle on the issue of which his whole future depended, and not an unkind word escaped his lips touching those whose malignity was still causing him acute suffering. During the remainder of my stay in Calcutta I was privileged to enjoy much of his company, and soon came under the spell thrown on all who really knew him by his extreme kindliness and sympathy. No man of self-gained distinction ever acquired more completely the art of disguising his superiority, and in his presence the humblest of his associates felt at ease. But there was one chapter in his life which I was not allowed to open until many years had ripened our friendship. His thoughts were never far from his wife and children, but he never spoke of them to me. This reticence, which flowed from the intense strength of his domestic affections, gave his enemies a handle against him.



On Lord Ripon's return to Calcutta he showed his keen sense of justice by naming Hunter an additional Member of the Legislative Council. This was a terrible blow for the plotters, but their malevolence was not exhausted. Hunter must hold some office besides his post in Council. It was arranged to have him gazetted to one of a subaltern order, unconnected with statistical inquiries. The intended victim learnt the subterfuge in time to thwart it. He placed his claim before the Viceroy in a convincing light,<sup>1</sup> and the upshot was a signal triumph. He was gazetted Director-General of Statistics, as well as additional Member of Council, on an aggregate salary of £3800.<sup>2</sup> This un hoped-for success brought a change in the tone of his home correspondence, which becomes more joyous and unreserved. He wrote to Broughton on Christmas Day:—

This morning I was awakened as usual at six by the crows, kites, hawks, parroquets, and sparrows, had my "little breakfast," called for a friend at the Bengal Club, and before seven, was cantering across the moist plain in a thick mist on my dear little Arab. My friend is a famous Ruler in Central India, who has just come to Calcutta to join the Council. He told me some curious stories of the way in which our officers did justice in the old days before the Courts of law were established. General Nicholson,<sup>3</sup> who afterwards fell in the assault on Delhi in 1857, once settled a dispute as follows:—A wicked uncle had tried to seize the estate of his young nephew, and there was no real evidence to show which was in the right. So Nicholson had himself tied to a tree early one morning, raised a great outcry, and when the villagers came he vowed vengeance against the owner of the land upon which he (Nicholson) had been (as he pretended) robbed, and bound hand and foot by the plunderers. Forthwith the uncle rushed forward and assured Nicholson that he was not the owner, but that the land belonged to a young nephew of his, and that he could produce the title-deeds to prove this. Whereupon Nicholson decided the case in favour of the nephew, and told all the villagers that he had been tied to the tree by his own request!

On New Year's Day 1882 he revisited Suri, hallowed by the sweetest memories of early effort and success, and hastened to

<sup>1</sup> Printed Letter to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, dated 12th December 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter, dated 19th December 1881, and Government Notification of 23rd December.

<sup>3</sup> John Nicholson (1821-57) was the most striking figure in the group of heroes brought to the front by the Indian Mutiny. He had every quality called for in a general and administrator.



communicate the emotions evoked by the old familiar scenes to her who had always shared them.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*January 1, 1882.*

I have come up to Suri alone with my Arab, to dream over old memories. The place is much changed—all the old people gone, our first dear little bungalow a roofless ruin, and our second utterly demolished and carted away, with only deep trenches to mark the foundations of the walls. On the night of my arrival, although it was very late, I walked over by the light of a setting half moon to see the house where we spent our early married life. I could dimly make out in the closed back verandah, now open to the sky, the very spot where our first clothes press (bought at a great price in Calcutta) was set up. On the other side of the door you cleverly made a cupboard for stores out of the zinc-lined case of your square piano. In the room beyond, the stars shone down on the place where our bed stood, and where Broughton was born. The walls had fallen in, so that no trace remained of the contrivance by which we curtained off a slip of the room, between the two side doors, for our tiny dining-table. In the round room in front a slanting beam had fallen on the spot where your piano stood, and a heap of rubbish, honeycombed with white ants, covered the circular end at which I concocted my first articles for the newspapers, and where you used lovingly to look over my shoulder as I read out the oft-rewritten opening chapters of my "Annals of Rural Bengal." It was very sad, but very sweet, that visit at one o'clock in the morning to the dear scene of our early married joys. But as I retraced my steps across the Circuit House compound, I could not help feeling how prosperous our whole life had been, and how much each year had added to our happiness. We came here just nineteen years ago, very poor, very friendless, with our feet on the very lowest rung of a ladder from which, if we ascended it at all, we might at any moment fall back to the ground. I return now as the youngest civilian who ever reached the Viceroy's Legislative Council, with fame and adequate fortune assured, and with a dear wife and a beloved family who, even when distant from me, are a source of daily tenderness and reposeful love.

From the numbers of the lower class who crowd the verandah as I return from my solitary morning's ride, and announce themselves as old servants, and ask after "Broughton Baba," one would fancy that we had maintained an enormous establishment, with half the town in our pay. Poor people, time has dealt hardly with them. All are old, most have suffered from the fever which has of late years desolated this district, some are crippled with elephantiasis, others have swollen feet, and two are blind. They usually vary



the interview with weeping over old times, but I send them all away rejoicing, for your dear sake, with a rupee or two according to their station. They all remember you, darling, for how could any one who ever served you forget you? I cannot make them believe that "Broughton Baba" is now about as tall as myself, and they talk over his first fall from his pony in the avenue which leads down from the big tank to the doctor's house. I visited the very spot on the road this morning.

On 26th January he delivered his maiden speech in the Viceregal Council. It was, appropriately enough, in support of the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which placed severe restrictions on the native newspapers of India. The measure was carried almost without a dissent, and journalism in India became as unfettered as it is at home. Soon afterwards he was appointed President of an Imperial Commission to inquire into the whole question of education.<sup>1</sup> It was felt on all sides that our system of public instruction had fallen behind the times, and that large measures for reform must be undertaken. In announcing to Mrs. Hunter his acceptance of this arduous task, he wrote:—

*February 6, 1881.*

It will give me a great deal of trouble, as I shall have to work against constant intermeddling and obstructiveness. The Commission consists of picked representatives from all the Provinces of India, from the Government Services, the Education Department, the native community, and the Missionary Societies. So, if I can make my little Parliament pull together, we shall be strong enough to overcome the jealousy of the Secretariat.

*March 21.*

Another busy week is past. Besides our daily sittings to hear evidence, we meet in the early mornings in private committee, so I have the whole day occupied from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. All the questions to witnesses have to be put by me as President. Hence my attention is strained the whole time, and I am often so faint in the evening that I can scarcely speak. Thank heaven, the dinner-givers have suspended their operations till next cold weather, and I have several quiet evenings each week.

Relief came to his overtaxed brain in the migration to Simla, which he was entitled to share as a Member of the Legislative Council. On 8th April the Commission suspended

<sup>1</sup> Government Notification, dated 3rd February 1881.



its Calcutta session, after passing a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks to its Chairman.<sup>1</sup> He reached the hill capital a few days later, halting by the way at Aligarh, where an enlightened Mahammadan had opened a college for the higher training of his co-religionists. At Simla he rented Stirling Castle, a dilapidated house perched on the summit of a wooded hill which forms an outlying spur of the densely peopled ridge. It commanded a glorious panorama of the snowy range, and had a large but neglected garden. So delighted was the tenant with the isolation and pure air of Stirling Castle that he afterwards purchased the place, and made it his headquarters during the remainder of his stay in India. It was soon shared by a congenial spirit in Sir Courtenay Ilbert, who had become Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council.<sup>2</sup> The sittings of the Commission were now resumed, and witnesses from all parts of Upper India flocked to Simla for examination. In the midst of these useful labours he learnt the news of his father's death, and found comfort in his bereavement by doing good. The college at Aligarh appealed with force to the author of "The Indian Musalmans," and he wrote thus to the generous founder, the late Sir S. Ahmad Khan Bahadur, C.S.I.:—

July 4, 1882.

When I visited Aligarh in April, I was much impressed by the work which you have taken in hand for Mahammadan education. Will you accept as a token of my sympathy the enclosed cheque for Rs.1500? I should like the money to be spent on building a boarding-house, and the rental should, as you suggest, be devoted to a scholarship for a poor Mahammadan youth. If it be consistent with your rules to do so, please consider the boarding-house and scholarship as gifts in memory of my late father, who would have cordially sympathised with your work.

On 28th July he started on a tour through Upper India, holding sessions of his commission at six of the greatest cities. It is described by the Indian correspondent of *The Times* as—

Almost a royal progress. Enthusiastic public and official receptions welcomed Mr. Hunter everywhere. Scholarships and prizes had been subscribed for and founded in his name. No

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Hon. K. T. Telang, member of the Education Commission, dated 8th April 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Diary, 8th May 1882.



reasonable doubt can any longer be entertained but that a profound and genuine interest has been awakened in the result of the commission.<sup>1</sup>

The early days of September found him an inmate of Government House, Bombay, but the surroundings there were uncongenial.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*September 15, 1882.*

The house was flooded with soldier laddies, and I did not meet the heads of the Government whom I certainly ought to have met. Aides-de-camp are very pretty people, but they lisp in accents of their own, and I was too engrossed in serious affairs to pick up their dialect. The comparative statistics of the generals at home and the regimental dance, the odds upon horses unknown to fame, and the last thrilling intelligence about the lawn tennis tournament, seemed the only possible subjects of conversation. I felt as if I were under a glass bell, and escaped to Puna on the plea of being nearer my work. There I stayed with William Wedderburn, a brother of Sir David, who is always pleading the cause of the Indian peasants in Parliament. He is an old friend and a true reformer; he has the most generous heart and the finest head in the Bombay service, and although they hate him accordingly, they have had to give him one of the best appointments in the Presidency. I have persuaded him to take privilege leave and go to Simla, where my rooms at Stirling Castle are empty, and my servants will make him comfortable. I shall write about him to Ilbert, Baring, and Primrose. I expect it will be a case of Pegasus out of harness, for I can hardly imagine Lord Ripon coming into contact with such a man without incorporating him in the great work of reform which he has now in hand.

From Puna he struck across India to Utakamand, the summer capital of the Government of Madras, and there enjoyed the graceful hospitality of Sir Mountstuart E. Grant-Duff, Governor of the Southern Presidency.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*October 8, 1882.*

Mr. and Mrs. Grant-Duff have transplanted their younger children with them and created a real English home. The olive branches have taken to the Nilgiri Hills as kindly as the Australian blue gum tree. It is wonderful how a clever, serious man like his Excellency gives a tone to his staff. I suppose that the raw material

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 18th August 1882.



—the agreeable young soldier—is the same everywhere. But here every one is genial and intelligent.

In the middle of October he quitted “the sweet, half English, Neilgherry air,” of which Tennyson sings, for the stifling heat of Madras. He wrote thence:—

*October 18, 1882.*

The daily drain on my energies has fairly ended my youth, and I feel for the first time growing old. However unwell I may be, I can never lie up for a single day, for each brings a public sitting of the commission, besides visits to schools and receiving deputations. The heat is most oppressive, and among other nuisances the ink dries on the pen into a thick, oily fluid. I am staying with the Rev. W. Miller, a Free Kirker and the head of the great Christian College, which has 1350 students. My host has laid out a course of nightly dinner parties, in order to introduce me to people interested in education, and the meal is a hot but often animated performance, a regular ordeal by fire. At 10.30 I crawl to my bedroom, where I have a host of letters to answer with my own hand before I can stretch my weary limbs under the punkah.

A few days afterwards he became the guest of Sir Charles Turner, Chief Justice of Madras, who told him a remarkable story of the self-immolation of a Hindu widow.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*October 21, 1882.*

A poor woman of good caste, on learning of her husband's death in a distant province, cried out, “Sat-Ram, Sat-Ram,” meaning “the true god,” which in ancient times was the formal intimation of a widow's intention to burn herself. Her friends did their best to dissuade her, but finding this impossible, they tried to decoy her before the magistrate, under the pretext of taking her to the Ganges to bathe. But she divined their intention, jumped out of the cart and ran back to her village. Her family were in despair, and persuaded every landowner in the neighbourhood to deny her a spot of ground on which to erect a funeral pyre. Thereon she went round to each house in the village, calling down the most fearful curses on its owners if the right to carry out her holy purpose were refused her. At length a landholder, terrified by the wailing of the people placed under her ban, granted a nook of land, and a priest was found to officiate. The victim then took off her clothes, laid herself down, and was washed and purified like a corpse. The attendants put on all her best jewellery and garments. She then started up, and forcing her way through the



crowd, who fell back as if she already belonged to another world, she sprang to the top of the funeral pyre. Then, blessing the people and flinging her ornaments right and left among the crowd, she poured a jar of scented oil over her head and body, and in a moment was wrapped in flames. Meanwhile the Assistant Magistrate, who had been summoned by her relatives, arrived too late. As he had travelled by palanquin, instead of galloping to the scene of action, he was degraded and transferred to another district.

From Madras Hunter sketched his multiform labours in a letter to Mr. H. Primrose, Private Secretary to the Viceroy,<sup>1</sup> who replied:—

October 15, 1882.

I am very much obliged to you for your most interesting letter; and Lord Ripon, to whom I showed it, was very much pleased to have the *leger aperçu* which you give of the progress of the Education Commission. On the whole I think we may say that the evidence you have collected is encouraging, as showing that the task before the Government is not that of imparting movement to an inert mass, but of providing a channel and direction for forces already showing a good deal of vigour and vitality. I am afraid this necessarily means money, and Baring is already trembling at the "fair stand for more funds," which you announce to him the Commission will be compelled to make. However, let us hope that the prosperous years will bring abundance out of which something can be spared for the purposes of education. What we give now is little enough.

What you tell me of Lord Ripon's popularity is very gratifying. The illustration you give of it is identical with one given me in 1880 of Mr. Gladstone's popularity in Scotland by my cousin Rosebery. He told me that if ever he was at a loss in making a speech, he dragged in Mr. Gladstone's name and escaped from his difficulties under cover of the uproar. I hear the same thing about the feeling towards Lord Ripon from other quarters, and one sees it pretty clearly in the extracts from the vernacular papers.

In November appeared his "Brief History of the Indian People,"<sup>2</sup> a school-book on an entirely novel plan. It exhibits the growth of the races of the peninsula, the part they have played in the world's progress, and what they have endured from other nations. Notwithstanding its sternly restrained

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Henry Primrose, K.C.B., Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue.

<sup>2</sup> "A Brief History of the Indian People." Crown 8vo., 221pp. with map. Trübner, 1882.



and condensed style it is eminently readable, in this respect offering a marked contrast to the "disgusting dryness" of the average school history. Thus the little book had a rapid and brilliant success. The first edition of 5000 copies was sold out in a few weeks. A second was issued in the early part of 1883, and eighteen more followed. In the middle of November he was back in Calcutta, worn out with the sustained exertions of the preceding months. A neglected chill brought on a severe attack of bronchitis which his enfeebled frame threw off with the greatest difficulty. In order to avoid causing anxiety to his wife he did not inform her of the attack until he was struggling into convalescence after a month's severe suffering.<sup>1</sup>

The news of her husband's illness prompted Mrs. Hunter to join him at once. She left Weimar in January 1883, after making ample provision for her children's education. The prospect of reunion with one so necessary to his comfort worked like a spell with the invalid, who wrote to Broughton:—

*December 16, 1882.*

After weeks of gasping for breath in the agonies of asthma and bronchitis I am now myself again. But my brother Commissioners fought like tigers during my illness; and I was obliged to leave my bed for the Town Hall and tie them up in gangs, called sub-committees, each with a solid piece of work to get through. The newspapers are congratulating me on having my little Parliament so well in hand. If the editors only knew the unwritten history!

Early in 1883 he heard from Professor Blackie in response to a letter detailing the progress of the Commission.

*January 3, 1883.*

This is the second letter I have written in 1883, the first being to Lord Rosebery. Good luck to all concerned—πολλὰ τὰ ἐπὶ σοῦς, as the modern Greeks say: may your years be many and may your good works remain! I am obliged by your educational papers. Your position is easy to understand but difficult to command; the great thing being to strike a just balance between central control and freedom for local development. All balances in which, according to Aristotle, practical perfection consists, are

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter, dated 12th December 1882.



hard to maintain, a tendency to one-sidedness and excess being the persistent sin of all human associations, whenever you get beyond feebleness and lethargy. I am afraid that any advice from me in matters so far from my sphere of living experience would be of little use. But I imagine that the principle of self-help should be as largely called out as possible, and that the rigidity so injurious to English University men should give way to a system with more variety and flexibility, adapted to the wants of different classes of society.

Asthma is one of the most persistent of maladies, and our patient found it necessary to follow the advice of Dr. Cayley by undertaking a sea trip to Burma. Its incidents are told in the home letters :—

TO BROUGHTON HUNTER.

*January 22, 1883.*

I had a charming three days' sail across the Bay of Bengal and am now staying at Rangoon with Mr. Charles Bernard,<sup>1</sup> the Chief Commissioner. Government House is very pretty, built of black timber, quaintly carved, and stands in a garden beyond which spreads a park with noble trees. But my friend and his wife gave a dinner party every evening to introduce me to people interested in education; and I am toiling at a report on the *Gazetteer*.<sup>2</sup> One should not visit Indian governors except in robust health. My host knows the common people well and makes a capital guide. One morning he took me to the great Buddhist temple, known as the Shwe-dagon, a "Mountain of Gold." It rises to a tapering point the height of St. Paul's Cathedral, but is covered with gold leaf and overlooks a beautiful island-studded lake. The long avenues of temples which lead up to this glorious shrine are covered with exquisite wood carving and statues from Italy, Persia, India, China, and Japan. The people here are very prosperous. In India there is not enough land for the inhabitants, who are consequently poor. In Burma there is more than the people can cultivate, and they are a race of substantial yeomen. In India the women outnumber the men, and are therefore not well treated; in Burma the reverse is the case, so that every woman who wants a husband can find one and divorce him if he turns out badly. Another day Mr. Bernard took me to the market, a vast covered place with stalls as clean as those in Paris. In the fish market the counters are of marble, and they have long troughs in which the fish are kept alive and happy till a customer arrives. Outside is a steam tramway line; and between

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Charles Bernard, K.C.S.I. He died in Sep. 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Note by the Director-General of Statistics on the Burmese articles of the revised edition of the "*Imperial Gazetteer*," dated 18th January 1883.



the civilised market and railway squat learned priests, who write almanacs with iron pens on palm leaves, and tell fortunes by the stars, as we did a thousand years ago.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*January 26, 1883.*

I have had a very pleasant fortnight staying with Captain Raikes<sup>1</sup> at Kyuk Phyu, and Colonel Sladen at Akyab. Our lives are cast in pleasanter places than theirs. But Burma is a province full of capabilities and promise. The Chief Commissionership is, I think, the greatest channel for real work that can fall to the lot of an Indian civilian. Now I am back in Calcutta, all the better for my trip, but still pulled down by asthma and much in want of the sweet society of my wife. The new edition of my "Brief History of the Indian People" will soon be out. 1300 copies have been sold, and it has already been translated into five Indian languages.

Soon after his return he heard from Sir William Robertson, who had acted as Governor of Madras, in warm approval of a speech in Council on a measure aimed at extricating the peasantry of the Central Provinces from bondage to the money-lender.

*January 4, 1883.*

I cannot let a mail go without a word of strong appreciation of your just and manly speech anent agrarian discontent. Indian banking transactions are based on the Government demand for rent, or, as we should say in England, the land tax: not on the thrifty peasant's personal expenditure. The money-lender exists, like the local banks in Scotland, in order to render possible the punctual discharge of the burden on the land. Interest is no higher in India than want of security and dearth of money render it in America and elsewhere. To destroy the whole mechanism of rural economy by legislating against the money-lender is more than folly, it is wickedness.

Have you ever thought out what the drain caused by the public demands means for a rural population? So large a proportion of the cash that reaches any given village is carried away again to the District or Presidency capital that a want of the circulating medium enhances the interest payable, and the cares of the cultivator generally. I never realised the importance of these conditions till I found large agricultural populations in the United States practically living by barter because the railways swept away all the cash that reached village or townlet.

<sup>1</sup> Now Colonel F. D. Raikes, C.I.E., Commissioner of the Sagiang Division.



On 23rd February Mrs. Hunter arrived in Calcutta to cheer and cure her husband, and three days later he was able to preside at a great meeting of the Calcutta Ragged School, established by the American Unitarian Mission, under the Rev. C. H. Dall. The occasion was the birthday of George Washington, whose name, the chairman said—

Is loved and honoured in every free country on the surface of the globe. The animosities which his career excited between the mother country and her great daughter America, have long since merged in a proud satisfaction that the British race should have produced such a man. It is a privilege to join with his countrymen in commemorating his exploits in the presence of hundreds of children on whom they are conferring the inestimable blessing of a sound education. We should all remember that George Washington was not only great but good. His goodness was of the most practical kind—made up of honesty, kindness, and unselfishness. We cannot all be great, but we can all strive in our humble way to imitate his goodness. My reason for coming here to-day was not so much to see your admirable schools at work; it was because I found that Americans were doing something which we Britons should have done. You have taken up the very poorest class of the boy population and are teaching these waifs to earn an honest livelihood. It is a noble work for any Society to undertake; and I congratulate you on the success attending your efforts. In India there are no Poor Laws, and therefore more orphan children needing help than in other civilised lands. The contingencies of life in a tropical country are far greater than in the temperate zone, and I have always thought it an honour to India that she maintains her poor, not by law imposed on her from above, but by a deep wellspring of benevolence in the national heart. But that benevolence is necessarily one-sided; it supports the body and leaves the mind uncultivated. You Americans have supplemented what was wanting in the native system of child-relief.

A month later he made a more ambitious essay as a public speaker. The occasion was the passage through Council of a measure known as the "Ilbert Bill," because it was the duty of the legal member of the day to present it to the Legislature. Lord Ripon's instincts as a Liberal statesman told him that the time had come when obnoxious race distinctions should disappear from the Statute Book. Now, one of the most invidious in native eyes was the privilege enjoyed by European British subjects of trial for infraction of the criminal law only by men of their own race



The Viceroy and his advisers thought it was in a high degree anomalous to withhold from native civilians, who had gained office by open competition in England, the power to pass judgment on all offenders within their charges. Hardship flowed to a deserving class from this inability to try European delinquents, for they were necessarily relegated to remote and unhealthy districts. He therefore introduced a measure entitled the "Criminal Law Amendment Act," which conferred on native judges and magistrates of the civil service certain limited powers of dealing with offences committed by Europeans. Hunter's speech in Council on the Bill, delivered on 9th March 1883, traced the concessions made by the enlightened Government to native aspirations, and proved that the measure at stake was a corollary of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, and in accordance with natural justice and the trend of modern legislation. He followed this eloquent utterance by two long letters to *The Times*, which met the arguments against the Bill advanced by the judges of the Calcutta High Court, with masterly and convincing precision. Throughout the fierce controversy that followed, he stood forth the unfailing champion of a cause which appealed to his heart and reason, in utter disregard of the hostility evoked by his fearless advocacy. I need not trace the phases through which that controversy passed. The opposition was headed by the Calcutta Bar, who argued that the right of Britons to be tried by their peers was based on Magna Charta, and could be destroyed by no local enactment. But the discussion soon generated a deep current of hatred for a measure which tended to exalt the inferior race to the level of the superior. The position became as acute as that evoked forty years ago between white men and their erstwhile slaves in the Southern States. A European Defence Association was formed; mass meetings were held. The Anglo-Indian press threw oil on the flames, and Hunter's moderating influence was absent, for he had disposed of his interest in the *Englishman* on the death of Mr. Saunders in June 1879. At one moment it seemed as though India were on the eve of a White Mutiny. Lord Ripon was at length compelled to bow before the tempest which his well-



meaning reform evoked, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, as passed in January 1884, was robbed of every feature obnoxious to the European population. But the evil that men do lives after them. The demon of race hatred evoked in 1883 is still potent to keep asunder two forces which, were they united, would give civilisation and happiness to the Indian Empire. We know, on high authority, that many things are good without being expedient. Amongst them must be ranged the Ilbert Bill, if we judge it by results, the only sure touchstone of statesmanship.

In April the atmosphere of Calcutta reached boiling point in more senses than one, and the annual migration to Simla was hailed with intense relief by the members of Lord Ripon's Government. The first week of that grilling month found the Hunters ensconced at Stirling Castle, which had suffered severely by the snowstorms of the preceding winter. The letters to the children, who were studying at Weimar, tell the events of each week most charmingly. Hunter dreaded above all things losing touch with his dear ones, and no preoccupations were allowed to break the current of correspondence with them. He wrote:—

TO CAMPBELL.

*April 9, 1883.*

Indian workmen are curious people. The carpenters toil right through the day, from 7 A.M. till long after dusk, without a minute's rest except for an occasional draught of water. The bricklayers and plasterers are just the opposite—idle, thriftless fellows—while my painters and paperhangers work like Trojans, far more steadily indeed than such people deign to do at home.

TO WILLIE, MABEL, AND CAMPBELL.

*KHAIRA, April 22, 1883.*

The road hither from Simla runs for miles along the steep mountain side—at some places carved from a sheer precipice, at others crossing from one range to another by the merest neck of land, with a drop of several thousand feet on either side. Sometimes it passes through woods of oak and rhododendron, which last grows into a forest tree. The hillsides are covered with jessamine and great sprays of white and yellow flowers, yielding a delicious perfume. I sat down for half-an-hour to



read in a perfect bower of flowering creepers. The great want is water. There are no burns or cascades, and but a trickle issuing here and there from the solid rock.

TO MABEL.

September 24, 1883.

How is my dear wee daughter with all her aches and pains? I wish she was here to enjoy the perpetual floods of sunshine which we shall have for the next six months. The rainy season is over and the weather is bright and crisp, one unclouded day following another without any chance of mist or rain. The distant snowy ranges which were hidden during the heats of the three summer months, and were separated from us by fifty miles of thick cloud during the perpetual rains from July to September, have now become visible again. They stand up like a great semicircle of angels with white wings in the sky, and I look out on them from my library table, at which I am writing to you. In the early morning the wings are tipped with glorious pink, which fades away into more and more delicate colours as the sun mounts the heavens. Then they disappear in the glare of noonday, but stand forth again in the purple and crimson hues of sunset till at last they gradually vanish like grey ghosts into the night. How I wish you were here to enjoy the woods and the wild-flowers, and to take long rides with me in the evening!

In the meantime much solid work was done towards forming the Educational Commission's inquiries. Their report was drafted by Hunter, but it underwent a cruel mangling at the hands of a revisional committee. He wrote ruefully on 11th May to one of his colleagues: "The Commissioners' Report, as it will issue, must be a dull one; for my part has been so rearranged that it has ceased to be mine." But the diversity of opinion inevitable in so heterogeneous a body was reduced to a minimum by the President's tact. On 21st September he was able to give his friend Mr. Behramji Malabari, editor of the *Bombay Spectator*, an outline of the recommendations of the Commission. They exceeded 200, and were ranged in groups dealing with:—

- (1) Primary education.
- (2) Secondary and collegiate instruction.
- (3) The internal mechanism—inspectors, text-books, and control.
- (4) The external relations of the Education Department—grants in aid and private effort.



(5) Female instruction, and that of classes needing special treatment, such as Mahammadans, the children of noble families, and aboriginal races.

(6) Legislation.

It is, I think, to be regretted that technical education should have been expressly excluded from the scope of the Commission's inquiries. No one knew better than Hunter, or was able to place the fact in more convincing language than he, that a training in the useful arts would go far towards relieving the soil from the excessive burden placed upon it in thickly peopled tracts. But, in despite of limitations, the Commission's report led to useful reforms in education. The bulk of their recommendations was accepted by Lord Ripon, and formed part of the great system of local self-government which India owes to him.

A revision of the "Imperial Gazetteer" was in full swing, for the first edition was exhausted, and the census of 1881 had already rendered its statistics of population obsolete.<sup>1</sup> Hunter's voice was heard in Council on all questions on which he had an expert's knowledge. The series of Tenancy Acts, which were intended to protect the tillers of the soil against oppressive landlords' middlemen, had his discriminating support. It was said of Turgot, while Intendant of the Limousin under the old French monarchy, that the keyword of his policy was not pity or benevolence, but justice. We are sure to go wrong the moment we fail to perceive that justice alone can hold the balance true among all rights and all interests. So Hunter held that over-population was at the root of the rack-renting against which the Tenancy Acts of Bengal, the North-Western and Central Provinces, were aimed, and that State-aided migration to the vast cultivable acres which still awaited the plough was a better remedy than artificial restrictions placed on the enhancement of rent.<sup>2</sup>

He was a consistent supporter of Lord Ripon's Local Self-Government policy, which found so many detractors, but has achieved so remarkable a measure of success. The same generous

<sup>1</sup> *Ad interim* report on the progress of the revision of the "Imperial Gazetteer," dated 25th July 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Speech on the Central Provinces Tenancy Bill delivered in Council, 20th June 1883.



spirit led him to organise a movement which defeated a conspiracy among the reactionary party to deprive the Simla Municipality of representative institutions. His services towards the vindication of the ratepayers' right to elect their own delegates received the special thanks of the Punjab Government.<sup>1</sup>

Service so great and steadfast won for him the goodwill of Lord Ripon, who appears at one time to have thought of appointing him as Foreign Secretary. Hunter was, indeed, specially marked out for this office by his tact and power of sympathy, not less than by the poetry in his nature, which prompted him to respect birth and long-sustained prestige, and to delight in old-world ceremonies. Had the Viceroy carried out his intention, our relations with the haughty and punctilious feudatory chiefs would have gained a degree of cordiality which has not been seen since Lord Mayo's golden reign.

The approach of winter broke up the pleasant home at Stirling Castle. Mrs. Hunter set out on 5th November for Weimar, where the health of Broughton and Mabel called for a mother's care, and her husband escorted her Bombay-wards as far as Allahabad. Thence he went on to Calcutta, and set up house at 2 Middleton Street with the Ilberts. He found some solace from the pangs of separation in describing the doings of the metropolis to his wife speeding homewards.

#### TO MRS. HUNTER.

I am very lonely without you, but Mrs. Ilbert is kind, and does everything to make this house pleasant. . . . Mr. Quinton<sup>2</sup> and I share an opera-stall between us. There is a double company, for serious and comic opera. They are, on the whole, the best singers we have yet had in Calcutta, although the serious tenor has drunk himself husky and the comic soprano is nought. Some of the librettos are translated in the most grotesque fashion. In "*L'Elisir d'Amore*" there is a famous song which the lady ends with the line, "*Io non mer'to un senator.*" This is rendered "*I do not merit a collector.*" Not bad for a piece of local colouring, I think!

<sup>1</sup> Official letter, No. 182, dated 10th July 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. T. W. Quinton afterwards became Chief Commissioner of Assam, and was one of the group of British officers murdered at Manipur in February 1891.



## CHAPTER XVII

### FAREWELL TO INDIA

IN the middle of January 1884 Hunter took advantage of a lull in the strife that raged round the Ilbert Bill to enjoy an excursion on the Hugli. He examined the shoals of that treacherous river from the deck of the Government steamer *Resolute*, and told his daughter a story of the perils undergone by those who keep open to navigation the approaches to Calcutta.

TO MABEL.

March 16, 1884.

I passed a lighthouse, far out at sea, built on wooden piles, with nothing but surging water around it as far as the eye could reach. A terrible accident happened there lately. One night the crew of a passing steamer saw the lighthouse keeper and his wife waving white cloths in great excitement from the gallery, and the captain supposed that they were warning him to stand away from the shoal. He did so, but the poor creatures continued their frantic signals, so he dropped his anchor, and lay to till the following morning in order to find out what they wanted. Meantime the people on the lighthouse felt the building cracking in all directions and sinking slowly into the sea, and as darkness came on they redoubled their signs of distress. When dawn returned the lighthouse had disappeared with its inmates, and there was only a waste of waters where it had stood.

A week after his return he presided at a public meeting held in the native quarter of Calcutta on reform in the position of Hindu women—a subject which he laboured long and earnestly to promote in association with Mr. B. M. Malabari of Bombay. His remarks from the chair were inspired by a happy married life, and they made a profound impression on his hearers.

The hesitation which underlies the stock objections to educating women, put plainly, mean that an uneducated wife is more apt



to accept without remonstrance the evil traits in her husband's character. I admit this; but what is the greatest help to a man in life? His own sense of self-respect. And what is the next greatest? The companionship of an honoured wife. The real question is, Do you wish your wives to be playthings or companions? Of one thing you may be sure. Whatever the ultimate sanctions for human conduct, whatever the influence of religion or of the police, the fear of final damnation or the terrors of the jail, the best safeguards for man against the little temptations to wrongdoing are his own self-respect and a noble trust in and deference to the judgment and rectitude of his wife.

On 30th January he took the chair at a gathering of citizens of all degrees eager to do honour to the memory of Keshub Chunder Sen, the founder of the Brahma Somaj. His appreciation of the great reformer's character and work was pregnant with heartfelt eloquence. What was there, he asked, in his dead friend's career, that sufficed to bring together so representative an audience?

It is because we have recognised in him a man of rare simplicity, genius, and power, whose life was devoted to the welfare of others, and whose memory is hallowed by the pathos of an early death, that we are here to-day to do him honour. . . . Permit me to conclude with a few words in which Keshub Chunder Sen expressed his conception of a great man. "The peculiar destiny of such a man is to live and die for one idea. This idea is nothing more than a definite plan of the particular reform needed at the time. Around him he finds society degraded, impoverished, ruined: within him lies an ideal of what society ought to be—an ideal which constantly seeks to realise and develop itself. His life is thus a continued struggle, which ceases only with life itself." My friends, the one aim of Keshub Chunder Sen was the advancement of his countrymen to loftier standards of religion and to freedom of thought. For that idea he lived; in that he died.

But, while he was a hero-worshipper, his sound common sense forbade him to plunge into the excesses to which enthusiasm is prone. Like every founder of a creed, the Apostle of of Eclectic Theism suffered an apotheosis after his death. Hunter wrote to his second son while the movement was at its height:—

TO WILLIAM.

*April 14, 1884.*

I have been puzzled and annoyed by some native friends of mine who are followers of the late famous preacher and religious



reformer, and wish to treat him almost as a deified person. This is not my view of the matter, considering that he dined with me regularly and was a very good fellow, but no demigod!<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, Dr. Jowett, Lord Northbrook, and many other Englishmen of note have joined the General Committee of the Memorial Fund, and this indiscreet deification is rather awkward for the subscribers, is it not?

In the middle of February he paid a visit to a tea-plantation opened by his friend Mr. Frederick Verner in the Duars, a fertile tract at the base of the Bengal Himalayas, and enjoyed a ride through the jungle with his host. The impression left by this plunge into the wilderness, and the means adopted by the tea planters to relieve the solitude of remote gardens, are told in a letter to little Campbell.

*March 4, 1884.*

Last week I returned from a journey through a wild country of mountain and forest. The grass there is twenty-five to thirty feet high, and rose far above me when riding on my elephant. The gentleman with whom I stayed was fond of beasts. A pack of dogs yelped and bayed as soon as the sun rose. Then the tame monkeys in their house, perched on a high pole, began shrieking for their breakfast. They bullied the big, good-natured dogs, pulled their tails, plucked away their dish of porridge and carried it to their little house with much laughter. Then there was a wild boar which had been caught as a baby and reared on milk. He followed his master everywhere and savagely attacked any one who pretended to strike him. My friend had also a tame doe, which wore a silver collar and slept in his bedroom. His bell went tinkle all night, so you may guess how much sleep I got!

On 16th March he went up to Simla for the hot weather, finding the place—

Most beautiful under its covering of rhododendrons in full bloom, pink peach and snowy apricot blossom, the sober grey-green of the ilex and darker colouring of the cedars.<sup>2</sup>

But Stirling Castle was still in the builders' hands, and its owner had to mount to his bedroom by a ladder like Robinson Crusoe. In order to escape the dust and dirt he took Sir

<sup>1</sup> An old French nobleman, on hearing of the canonisation of St. François de Sales, exclaimed, "What! is my dear friend M. de Sales a saint? I am delighted to hear it. He was an excellent man, and a thorough gentleman. His only fault was that he was a little given to cheating at picquet!"

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter of 24th March 1884.



William Wedderburn, who was then visiting Lord Ripon, on an excursion into the depths of the Himalayas. The dangers of mountain travel before the destruction wrought by winter torrents is repaired are graphically told in a letter to his son William.

*April 28, 1884.*

The snows and streams have, in some places, swept away all vestiges of a road. It is at best a narrow ledge running along the steep hillside, and sometimes carved from the face of a sheer precipice. Now great trees have been carried down the mountain and project across it, blocking the way for four-footed beasts. We got across by forming an inclined plane of earth on either side. Occasionally huge trees are hurled down ravines till they are stopped by a bridge, which they either smash and carry before them, or else spread their roots over the frail planks. We had some bad impediments of this sort to get our horses over, with a precipice above and another below. But our worst encounters were with snow-drifts. At one place an avalanche had filled up a ravine, slowly working its way down the chasm from the top of the hill, till stopped by a bridge which it quietly pushed out into space. The incline of the snow was so steep that the horses could not have kept their footing, so we went to work with our alpenstocks and cut a little path across the drift, with walls of about one foot high on either side. The lane was not twelve inches wide, and it was great fun to see the trepidation with which the ponies carefully planted one foot before another in crossing it. We had only one accident. I scrupulously dismounted at all the bridges and led my pony over. But on a single occasion, when much interested by my friend's talk, I omitted to do so and was punished for my forgetfulness. My pony put his forefoot right through a rickety wooden bridge over a chasm and came down on his nose. I got off, you may be sure, as quickly as I could. Then we made the pony lie quiet for a minute to collect his senses and regain his breath, for he was panting with terror. Then Sir William, the groom and myself tugged him up. He made an effort and got his two forefeet all right; but in the struggle one of his hind legs went through. However we hoisted him out in time and went on our way rejoicing. The poor old groom was blubbering like a baby over his fallen horse.

On his return from this perilous trip he was asked by Sir Theodore Hope, who was Lord Ripon's Public Works Minister, to proceed to England, in order to represent the views of Government to a Parliamentary Committee which was considering the policy of railway extension in India. He was



by no means anxious to comply, for the deputation would involve a hot journey and sadly interfere with the revision of the "Imperial Gazetteer." But he yielded to Lord Ripon's earnest wish, and went out to Sir Theodore's retreat at Mahasu, near Simla, to study all the bearings of the complex problem. After mastering it he gave his views to the Minister.

TO SIR THEODORE HOPE.

May 13, 1884.

The facts show that railway extensions can alone solve the problem of population here—a problem which involves special legislation, alike for those who leave the overburdened land in the shape of Emigration Acts, and for those who remain in that of means for marketing their produce. Railways are the one chance which India has for redistributing her food supplies, equalising prices, and preventing famines. During that of 1866 Calcutta was compared to a ship at sea without provisions. To this day there are many districts in which it does not pay to raise more of the staple crops than can be locally consumed, and where an abundant harvest is as disastrous to the cultivator as a dearth.

Other public affairs needed his presence at home. He wrote on 11th May to Mrs. Hunter:—

Lord Ripon's Education despatch goes to England to-day. It is based on a note of mine, but is the result of a series of compromises in Council, and has little pith. However, all the chief recommendations of our Commission are accepted, and mine as regards Female Education *en bloc*. . . . Then the Viceroy wishes me to consult the various Universities, Scotch and English, about the limit of age of candidates for the Indian Civil Service.

He left Simla at the end of May, and after a fearfully hot passage and several detentions in quarantine, landed at Venice on 12th June and hurried onward to Weimar. His feelings at the prospect of seeing those dear to him again, found utterance in a letter from Brindisi:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

June 7, 1884.

I can scarcely write, I am so overjoyed at the thought of this meeting! Ask the children how they would like to spend Saturday evening. Say dinner at 4.30, and then go on a long country drive till nine or 9.30, according to your light at Weimar. I shall be



quite submissive and leave everything in your hands. So plan out what we are to do beforehand, and give plenty of thought to it next week.

His stay at Weimar was cut short by the business that awaited him in London, and on 18th June he was installed in his old quarters at 39 Dover Street, Piccadilly, overlooking the garden of Devonshire House. The campaign opened at once. On 20th June he gave Lord Ripon a detailed account of a conference with Mr. Baxter, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, and the present Lord Cross, who represented the views of Government. Suffice it to add that his evidence on the great railway question went far towards silencing the opposition of timidity and ultra-conservatism. Sir Theodore Hope wrote some months later :—

*December 24, 1884.*

Having had occasion to go through your evidence before the Select Committee I cannot resist sending you a few lines to say how admirable in all respects it is. You stated the views of the Government of India in the most complete and compact form, meeting the objections raised and questions asked with great readiness and accuracy; and your evidence was exactly what we wanted to obtain.

The policy which flowed from the Committee's report has wrought untold good for India. The mileage of railways has more than doubled in the interval. Many private schemes for developing the resources of the interior came to a successful issue, and the great gauge question was solved on common-sense lines. We see the results in the remarkably even range of food prices throughout the Empire, in vast accessions to the cultivated area, and in the limitless growth of our resources in waging war with famine. Hunter wrote with a just sense of triumph when the struggle was over :—

TO BROUGHTON.

*July 20, 1884.*

Did I tell you that the Secretary of State in Council had sent me his official thanks for the way in which I have discharged the duty entrusted to me? I have also managed the Education Despatch business capitally, and got the opposition to change their address to Lord Kimberley (Secretary of State for India) from a damaging protest into a strengthening memorial. Now I am busy



with the Limit of Age question for the Civil Service candidates. I hope to get all the Scotch Universities to move, and to win over Dr. Jowett of Balliol to our views.

Lord Ripon was moved to reopen this subject by a wish to render the Civil Service more accessible to Indian youths. There had been more than the usual amount of vacillation in the framers of rules for admission to that body. Between 1860 and 1865 the maximum age-limit for candidates was twenty-two years; but it had been reduced to nineteen. The change was disastrous not only for the Indian middle-classes but for the public schools and Universities at home, because it brought the specialist, commonly called the "crammer," into being, and made an expensive training almost essential to success in the open competition. The Government of India wished to restore the former age-limit, and again found a powerful advocate in Hunter. He induced the Scottish Universities to memorialise the Secretary of State in favour of the change. The headmaster of Eton, which now numbered Hunter's second son William amongst its pupils, was led to throw his influence into the scale. On 20th July Hunter went to Oxford and talked the reform over with Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol, in his silent and beautiful garden. Such pressure was not to be resisted, and it led to the change desired—a change which has worked most favourably for our educational system and given India a distinctly superior class of civil officers.

On 8th August he joined Mrs. Hunter, having rendered splendid service to his employers during the few weeks spent in London. But his eager spirit forbade him to enjoy the relief offered so bounteously by restful Weimar. A Congress of the German Colonisation Society, established in 1882 by Prince Bismarck, was sitting at Eisenach, and Hunter was inclined to view the problems discussed in a spirit favourable to the Fatherland. The British press had adopted a hostile attitude, and his sense of justice induced him to place the cause of German aspirations before the public. The following letter appeared in *The Times* of 22nd September, in all the honours of large print, with a leading article in hearty approval:—

The Conference of the German Colonial Association, held yesterday, has given special prominence to your recent article



entitled "The Scramble for Africa." To any one who realises how the struggle for existence in Germany is intensified by the pressure of the rural classes on the soil and by the overcrowding in most branches of industry, it must have been a source of regret that England should be supposed to take up an unsympathetic attitude to measures intended as a remedy for these evils. The distaste that Englishmen at present feel for South African affairs, and diplomatic delays in a matter in which none of our political parties took any particular interest, were interpreted as latent hostility by our German kindred in the first fervour of a new national movement. In considering the issues involved, it should be remembered that questions which may be of comparative indifference to us have become in Germany subjects of sensitive national feeling. One secret of the permanent success of Prince Bismarck, apart from his personal genius for rule, is his unerring insight as to what the German people are in earnest about. That they are in earnest on the question, the attitude of the press and the candidates for the following elections attests. . . . Causes are now at work in Germany which compel both the Government and the people to provide an outlet for the surplus population. At present the German who emigrates identifies himself with the nation which he enters, with a sentimental tenderness for the Fatherland, but with a practical appreciation of the fact that German nationality means compulsory military service. The German Government objects to losing its subjects, and the existing conditions are not sufficiently attractive to afford an adequate relief to the growing number of the people. Any one accustomed to study the phenomena of over-population in India finds himself confronted with many of the same facts in Central Europe. The margin between production and consumption is yearly growing narrower. The German peasant fights the battle of life with an incessant industry, a rigid self-denial altogether unknown in England. But the struggle is a hard one, and the death-rate here is very high. The people are beginning to realise that infant mortality takes the place of colonial expansion, and that they pay for their contracted national life, not only by the hardships of the poor and the economy so stringently imposed on all classes, but also by their children's deaths. This is one of a group of facts which has created a settled conviction in the German mind that colonial expansion has become a necessity, whatever the ultimate results may be.

This letter had an immediate effect, and its views, so temperately and convincingly expressed, are as true at the present day as when it flowed from Hunter's ready pen. He told his wife:—

*September 22.*

The great English papers are now swearing that they have always wished well to German colonisation, and this day's telegrams



summarise articles in the *Cologne Gazette* and other German journals couched in the same amiable spirit. So I have put an end to that piece of folly.

The Secretary of State for India urged Hunter to tarry awhile in England in order to prepare the Decennial Report of Indian Progress for Parliament, but Lord Ripon hinted that Government would require his help during the ensuing winter. In point of fact two high appointments, for either of which he was eminently fitted, were about to fall vacant—those of Foreign Secretary and of Chief Commissioner of Assam. He thought it possible that one of them might be awarded to him in acknowledgment of his services; and in India, as elsewhere, the absent are always in the wrong. He determined, therefore, to return at once; and, instead of drafting the great report, he prepared a skeleton of 177 folio pages, and induced Lord Kimberley to entrust Mr. J. S. Cotton with the task of filling in details. Then, after five months' work as strenuous as was ever rendered, he bade adieu to the little Weimar household and started for London. Thence the *Massilia*, a large P. and O. steamer of the latest type, took him to Bombay direct, for overwork had rendered a long sea voyage essential. Its humours are quaintly described in the home letters.

#### TO MRS. HUNTER.

MALTA, October 8.

Our little maritime community has settled down to its regular life. The Bay of Biscay was *très-gentil*, but most of the ladies played the rôle of the "Pensive Fair" for a couple of days. Mrs. — and her Colonel are the same as they were at Simla—he stupid, she very vocal indeed. The ship's piano is going from morning to night, and a constant succession of voices appear to be trying over new pieces which they will never master. They remind me of the fourth Hindrance to Salvation in Buddhist theology, "Restlessness of the vocal organs." We have the usual terrible young man who is always "getting up" things. He was pestering me to give out the songs at his concert the other evening, so I said in chaff, "Ask the Bishop of Madras." He replied, quite seriously, "But I have," and I suggested, "Try him again." He went off, quite happy, to do so. He is a representative of some commercial firm in Madras, and the idea of the serious Bishop of that ilk yoked to a bagman's car was admirable. We had a wonderful eclipse of the moon last night—an absolutely total



eclipse, such as one seldom sees. But the said bagman whipped all the passengers into the saloon, and persuaded Sir Comer Petheram to give out his songs. Lady P. was naturally annoyed, and got her husband to come on deck for the wonderful spectacle. The bagman followed to claim his prey. "Oh," he said, "total eclipses are so common!" I put on a grave face, and said, "But you see this eclipse is on the port side of the moon." "I don't see how that affects the question," he answered, in perfect good faith, and again led the Chief Justice of the North-Western Provinces captive. But Sir Comer had his revenge. The next piece was a comic one, called "Poor Fellow," and the singer was the bagman himself. It was given out as "A Comic Song by Mr. —, poor fellow!"

RED SEA, *October 21.*

Lord Ripon has done nothing for me, and intends to do nothing about the Foreign Secretaryship, as he wishes to leave the selection to Lord Dufferin. So he will put Durand<sup>1</sup> in to officiate again. What a pity it is that, with all Lord Ripon's goodness of intention and kindliness of heart, he has neither firmness to carry a measure nor courage to recommend a friend.

On reaching Bombay he revisited Surat and Ahmadabad, and ascended Guru Sikr, near Mount Abu, in Rajputana, the sacred spot of the powerful sect of Jains, in order to ascertain what architectural evidence there was in support of its claim to greater antiquity than the Buddhists could boast. His companion was the Bishop of Bombay, whom he describes as—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*November 4, 1884.*

Very entertaining, and talking of secular things with great *verve*. He was appointed to the see of Bombay so young as to be styled the "Boy Bishop." He began life as a High Church ascetic, but is now married to a charming lady, to whose return, with her baby, from England he looks forward with naïve and amusing impatience. His chaplain lagged behind, lest he should interfere with his lordship's conversation, so I dropped behind to have a chat with the young priest. He was a missionary broken in health, whom the Bishop appointed to act as chaplain, in order to give him a chance of recovery during the lighter tour. The one idea of the ecclesiastic was that more bishops are required, but not dignitaries on £4000 or £5000 a year. His conception was purely apostolic—a superintendent over a small group of clergy on a salary of £600.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Mortimer Durand, G.C.M.G., H.B.M. Ambassador to the Court of Spain.



He thought it one of the sins of our age that £90,000 must be raised in England before a new bishopric is considered adequately endowed.

He reached Calcutta in time to witness the departure of Lord Ripon on 13th December. It was the occasion of an outburst of native feeling such as India had never experienced.

TO MABEL.

*December 16, 1884.*

For six miles the road was lined with natives in their holiday attire. Triumphal arches were placed at frequent intervals, and the whole was brilliantly illuminated, every house and tree ablaze with lamps. There was one long continued cheer as the Viceroy was driven at a gallop, with his bodyguard riding as fast as the horses could carry them.

These demonstrations were most galling to the Europeans, who mustered in equal strength to welcome the Earl of Dufferin, as a protest against the ovation rendered to his predecessor.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*December 16.*

Lord Dufferin arrived on Saturday, and when I was presented on his passage up the steps of Government House, he said, "Your name is very familiar to me, Mr. Hunter." Yesterday I had a long talk with the new Private Secretary, Mr. Donald Mackenzie Wallace, the author of two capital volumes on Russia. He was very civil, and seems a man whom I am likely to get on with. But now that I have less than two years' service remaining, I begin to feel as if the train were slowing down on entering the station, and I don't care much what happens during the few minutes before it draws up. I will do my best in my present position or any other I may be called on to fill.

The jealousy evoked by Hunter's career in some of those who surrounded the new Viceroy thwarted his hopes that his services would meet with substantial acknowledgment. He remained in the same office as he had filled seventeen years previously, and learnt to his cost that a bureaucracy never forgives. And, to add to his misfortunes, he found a large proportion of his savings swept away by the folly of one in whom he trusted. He writes sadly to his faithful wife:—



TO MRS. HUNTER.

*December 16.*

I am afraid that we shall lose nearly £2500 by ——. Never again will I lend money to a "professing Christian." They venture on things for which an acknowledged knave would be sent to prison. But it is of no use being harsh, and I should not like the ruin of any man to rest at my door.

But in spite of the heart sickness of hope deferred, he continued to show a bold front to the world. I lived at the time in chambers close to him at the India Service Club, and accompanied him in many trips on the Hugli and phaeton drives through the green lanes which fringe Calcutta. He was always the centre of a circle which he delighted with his exuberant spirits and his frank appreciation of humour. A not very literal version of one of my anecdotes appears in a letter to little Campbell.

*December 2.*

A gentleman at dinner last night told us a wonderful story. He was fishing off the coast of France, where conger eels are large and fierce, and hauled on board a specially huge one. It reared up and sprang at him; he threatened it with one oar, which it bit in two, and then snapped at my friend's leg. So he jumped overboard and swam for his life, leaving the eel in possession of the boat. Was not that a good story? It was perhaps too good to be true, but we all laughed.

Hunter's duties as a legislator absorbed much of his time during the winter of 1884-85. The Viceroy's Council was considering the Bengal Tenancy Act, a measure which aimed at protecting the tiller of the soil against excessive enhancement. One section, representing the Bengal Government, believed that the end would be attained by securing fixity of rent and tenure for the ryot. Another, headed by Hunter, regarded over-population as the source of rack-renting, and urged that its effects might be counteracted by favouring migration to the immense waste areas in Central India and Assam. The outcome of the debates was a compromise. The Act, as finally passed by Council, was deprived of its revolutionary features, and was an honest effort to reconcile the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant. The struggle is



touched upon in the home letters, which also describe the feverish social life in Calcutta at a season of unusual brilliance.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*January 20, 1885.*

Lord Dufferin is winning golden opinions among the thoughtless throng, but the councillors are asking when his Excellency proposes to begin to work. Perhaps that will come in due time. The great land law, which threatens to revolutionise the rural economy of Bengal, is labouring like a ship in a storm without a captain. The Bengal Government, or rather the poor invalid Lieutenant-Governor, is under the rule of three Irish secretaries. . . . I think I knocked the life out of the most dangerous of their propositions on Saturday last; but they now say that, as they cannot get all they work for, they would prefer having no legislation at all, and thus throw away the work of four years. We are waiting and wondering how much of this childish petulance the new Viceroy will stand.

TO MABEL.

*January 27.*

Dearest of little Daughters,—Calcutta has been suffering for the past month from a series of royal visits. First came the Princes of Sweden—great tall, fair men, one of whom was soon laid low by fever. Next there were our own Duke and Duchess of Connaught, both of whom are up to any amount of dining and dancing. Now the Grand Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin are here, with Don Carlos, Duke of Madrid, a claimant to the Spanish throne. He is a big, black, restless man, a great contrast to the northern royalties with their blond locks and bland manners. All these, and many other distinguished travellers have been the guests of the Viceroy this winter, and our balls and banquets are past reckoning.

His home correspondence was, perforce, neglected in the whirl of business, and that which the world styled pleasure. The most noteworthy letter of this season was from Sir James Stephen, who was about to publish his "Story of Nuncomar and Sir Elijah Impey," an English lawyer's view of the secret motives which brought the Bengali marsh-snake to the scaffold. The main facts of this curious episode in Indian history are familiar enough. Warren Hastings' Council in 1775 was rent by factions, and a death-struggle was in progress between the Governor-General and Sir Philip Francis. Nuncomar threw all the weight of his astuteness and utter absence of scruple



into Francis's scale, and Hastings saw that a *coup d'état* alone could confound his enemies and restore his legitimate authority. This was effected by the arrest of Nuncomar on a stale charge of forgery, on which he was tried and condemned to death by Sir Elijah Impey, the first Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal. His execution was regarded with horror by his brother Brahmans, and on Hastings' foes it had the same effect as the doom of Louis XVI. had with those of the first French Republic. Sir Elijah's memory has been covered with eternal shame by Macaulay's glowing essay, and Sir James Stephen's book is a masterly piece of special pleading intended to rehabilitate it. But the great lawyer writes in a strain which one who had never left the purlieus of Lincoln's Inn might adopt. He fails to grasp the Orientalising process to which Hastings' character was subjected by intimate relations with native society maintained since boyhood. In hearkening to the whispers of delation and bringing his adversary to an ignominious death, he did no more than any Eastern statesman would have attempted at such a crisis in order to convince waverers that his was the strongest side. Posterity will regard Nuncomar's doom as a moral stain on the memory of our great Proconsul, but it will also remember that vast personal and imperial issues were at stake, and it will regard Sir Elijah Impey as the dupe rather than the conspirator. In thanking Hunter for valuable information on Nuncomar's life and pedigree, Sir James Stephen wrote :—

January 14, 1885.

I hope in a few weeks to publish a volume on the quarrel between the Government and the Supreme Court. The story of Nuncomar's relations with that body has never yet been told with any approach to competent knowledge, and it is extremely curious. It shows me one thing which I never understood before—the depth of the indignation felt by the East India Company at the usurpation by Parliament of that which they regarded as their private property—the sovereignty over India. The Supreme Court of Hastings' day had great faults, but it was hated as much for its good points as for its bad ones. As to Impey, I think no one has ever had such bad luck in this world as far as reputation went. He appears to have been no prodigy, but an accomplished, energetic, bold, warm-hearted man. I think him absolutely innocent both of injustice to Nuncomar and of accepting a bribe from Hastings.



In the middle of March, Hunter left Calcutta for Khandwa Junction, on the railway line to Bombay, in order to meet his wife, who had yielded to his entreaties for her presence at his side. On the journey to Simla, they halted at Indor in order to visit the grave of Mr. G. R. Aberigh-Mackay, whose incomparable sketches of Indian life and manners under the pseudonym, "Ali Baba," showed how bright a star in the firmament of literature set when he passed away at thirty-two. His monument is described in the diary as—

A low marble tomb, surrounded by an iron railing and by beds of pelargoniums, roses, and white oleander, inscribed—

In loving memory of  
GEORGE ROBERT ABERIGH-MACKAY,  
"Ali Baba,"

Principal, Residency College, Indor.

Born 25th July 1848.

Died 12th January 1881.

The cemetery *māli* (gardener), who had been poor Mackay's, was watering the flowers, and wept bitterly when I spoke to him of his master.

Simla was reached in due course, and the Hunters settled down in Stirling Castle, which had been practically rebuilt by its new owner. His main work was the revision of the "Imperial Gazetteer," but his instincts as a journalist were gratified to the full. In the previous winter, I introduced him to the editor of the *Englishman*, Mr. Andrew Macdonald, whose early death was mourned by those who recognised in him great literary power, an unfailing spring of quaint humour, and a kindly heart.<sup>1</sup> Hunter was greatly taken by the genial Bohemianism of poor Macdonald; and his pen was soon at work in the Calcutta daily paper, after a hiatus of five years. It produced a series of exquisite sketches on the old graves of Calcutta and the career of Thackeray's family in India, which gave the utmost pleasure to the kinsfolk of the great novelist. In after years they formed the basis of "The Thackerays in India" (1897), a work which will be enjoyed while the English language

<sup>1</sup> He died of pneumonia in London, in March 1899.



lasts. In 1883, the author had not determined to give these *ephemerides* a permanent form; and, with his usual kindness, he placed them at the service of a fellow-student. He wrote to the late Sir Henry Leland Harrison, who was collecting materials for a revised edition of Holmes' curious "Collection of Indian Epitaphs":—

April 3, 1885.

My intentions in regard to the little sketches in the *Englishman* are limited to writing one more on Augustus Cleveland, and a general concluding one. Whatever I have written, or may write hereafter, is at your service. But I think that the systematic notices should come from your own pen or some other which is not so over-burdened as my own. The sketches were most hastily written during hours which I would otherwise have been hanging about ball-rooms. I feel that I am unamiable in the matter of going out; and I wrote these little things as a sort of humble *amende* for my neglect of general society, and of the hospitalities which Calcutta so generously proffers to my unresponsive self.

A little later he told the life-story of a "Pilgrim Scholar" in the *Pioneer* of Allahabad. Its hero was a Hungarian linguist who, in 1824, travelled on foot to the Himalayan plateau, in the hope of discovering the cradle of his mysterious nationality. He failed in his quest, but it led him to turn his thoughts to Tibetan. After years of untold privations he produced a dictionary and grammar of that language which are the basis of our knowledge of its literature. A career devoted to a single object and pursued with utter disregard of self, in Arctic cold, in hunger and contumely, touched the innermost springs of Hunter's being. It is easy to read between the lines in the following passages and trace an obvious parallel:—

We learn that Csoma, in addition to his physical sufferings, had to wrestle with those spiritual demons of self-distrust, the bitter sense of the world's neglect, and the paralysing uncertainty as to the value of his labours which have eaten the heart of the solitary worker in all ages and in all lands. Like Buddha, he had to bear his temptation in the wilderness alone; but, unlike Buddha, no angels came to comfort him after his struggle with the doubting enemy of mankind. . . . A great literary enterprise like Csoma's is in India usually inaugurated by a Governor-General of large views, who clearly sees what the country and the British nation will in the end gain by it. But it is hateful to a certain type of



official, cramped by the long formalism of his life and honestly unsympathetic to any work outside the circumvallations of routine, which form the defences of his little citadel. Such animosity seldom affects the main results, if the worker has learnt to keep his temper and to suffer fools. . . . The petty affronts and smarts which a man thus endures in carrying out a great work are no more worth remembering than scratches received in a battle.

His greatest task, the issue of a revised edition of the "Imperial Gazetteer," went on apace. The first edition, in nine volumes, was quickly exhausted, and the Indian Government fixed 31st March 1887 as the date within which a second was to be issued. In September 1885 the first four volumes were ready, and in presenting them to the Viceroy Hunter wrote:—

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF DUFFERIN.

*September 16, 1885.*

The work will now make thirteen volumes, and is the final outcome of the labour of my life. It condenses the results of a survey of an area equal to all Europe, less Russia, and peopled by twice the numbers of the subject-races which, according to Gibbon, obeyed the Roman Empire.

The reply came with commendable promptitude.

FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF DUFFERIN.

*September 16, 1885.*

I need not tell you how gratified I have been by your kind thought in sending me such a magnificent copy of your great work. You may well be proud of having concluded in so creditable a manner your gigantic task, and you will have raised to yourself as honourable a monument of industry, ability, and usefulness as any that will have been left behind them by the most distinguished of your Indian contemporaries, no matter in what walk of life they may have been engaged. I am afraid that you will now be undergoing a little of that feeling of regret experienced by Gibbon when he had written the last lines of his history; but, unlike Gibbon, you are still in the prime of life, and I hope that many years are still reserved to you of useful and distinguished employment in the service of your country.

Amongst those who welcomed the new issue in England was Mr. F. H. Fisher, who had rendered yeoman service in the preparation of the Gazettes for the North-Western Provinces. He wrote:—



*November 23, 1885.*

Had I not experienced what gazetteering meant, I should not have formed the dim and inadequate conception I have of the anxiety and worry attending it. Even with the miserable North-Western Provinces' compilation, which I took up after it had been deplorably stranded, I felt for the first month or two that I could have hanged myself on the doorpost with vexation at the inextricable muddle. Mr. A. O. Hume was in my room the other day, and spoke lightly of the burden of such a work; but I gave him my views straight. I can conceive of no literary undertaking which demands more pluck and endurance than yours.

Towards the end of October Hunter made a tour in the north-western frontier with his wife. They penetrated the frowning Khaibar Pass, through which so many tides of invasion have rolled on India, and spent two days at the fortress of Ali Masjid with Colonel (afterwards Sir Robert) Warburton, whose unrivalled knowledge of tribal politics would have averted the sanguinary struggle of 1897 had he not been compelled by cast-iron rule to quit the country which he administered so wisely. Thence the travellers moved to the Bolan Pass, traversing the whole borderland, and picking up much useful information regarding its history and ethnology. Hunter never forgot a kindness. He wrote gratefully to Colonel Warburton from Multan, receiving the following reply:—

FROM COLONEL R. WARBURTON.

*November 19, 1885.*

Whatever may have been my shortcomings as a host, the generosity with which you have acknowledged what I did have repaid me a hundred-fold. During the past five years I have taken many travellers up the Pass, but you are the first who has been good enough to remember me. . . . I can assure you I never enjoyed any trip to Landi Kotal as I did the one in your society. It is a pleasure which I shall not easily forget. I wonder what you think of the Bolan Pass and the chance of an invasion of India from that quarter? I still adhere to my view that Kabul must be the goal of the next Russian advance, and that an invasion of their country can be carried out only through the Khaibar Pass. If I am correct, what a splendid position is Landi Kotal for offensive and defensive action! I doubt there being another equal to it in the world. We hope that Mrs. Hunter and yourself are not too wearied by your journeys by night and day, and that she will have a pleasant voyage homewards.



The concluding words anticipated a fresh separation, which Hunter felt even more acutely than the last. His faithful companion bade him adieu at Karachi, whence she embarked for Bombay. He bent his course in the opposite direction, and on 4th December reached Chunar, a fortress which looms conspicuously on the traveller by rail between Cawnpur and Calcutta. It is a place of honourable confinement for State prisoners, whose manner of life is thus described in a letter to little Campbell:—

*December 8, 1885.*

There are now but three old rebel chiefs remaining. They spend their time in reading their own Bible aloud, and have given up all wish for freedom. They eat a good deal, and often require medicine from the doctor. I had a long friendly talk with them, and asked whether they had any wish to express. The oldest, a noble, white-bearded veteran, leaning on his staff, replied that the only complaint was that the milk served out to them was watered. He wished it was not so blue and thin!

He arrived at Calcutta:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*December 22.*

Dead tired with proof-sheets, my eyes sore, and my brain like a sponge. But I have now got nine volumes of the "Imperial Gazetteer" printed, and have read for the very last time the volume "India." You remember how despondent I was at Simla, how sorely I felt the hardship of squeezing the history of a continent during 5000 years into 650 pages? But, on reading it again after an interval, I am proud to think that it is a monument of labour which I am leaving to my children and the world.

A week later he told his youngest son a story which sheds a curious light on the habits of wild animals in confinement. He took two little girls for a drive in his mail-phaeton and bought the elder, aged seven, a large undressed doll, which the child insisted on carrying into the Zoological Gardens.

TO CAMPBELL.

*December 29, 1885.*

The tigers were quietly gnawing their bones when we went near the cage for they are accustomed to visitors. But they had never seen so big a doll before, and evidently thought that it was



a particularly tender baby, so they became excited, dashed violently against the bars, and thrust their great paws through in frantic efforts to seize the doll. You may imagine how frightened the children were! We moved on quietly to the lion's cage. The old lion did not disturb himself, but flapped his tail gently and looked benevolent and grand.

During the rest of the cold season he resided principally at the beautiful river-side villa at Uttarpara, five miles above the smoke and din of Calcutta, which was lent him by his old friend Mr. Jaikrishna Mukharji. He was always ready to share its pleasures with friends, and many were the merry parties which assembled there to enjoy a brief respite from the whirl of the most artificial society in the world. "You remember," he wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

December 29, 1885.

That fairy-like structure, with its pillared verandahs and marble floors. The library is quite unique for books on Indian history, and it takes the place of mine own at Simla. I have set apart a suite of rooms overlooking the broad Hugli for my work on the Gazetteer.

January 6, 1886.

At yesterday's Council meeting the Viceroy made a declaration of the general policy of the Empire, especially in its foreign and financial aspects. After it was over I embodied these grave utterances in two leading articles for the *Englishman*, and arranged for telegraphing the substance to London, Bombay, &c., before night. Then, as ill luck would have it, there was a dinner party followed by the Viceregal Levée: but I slipped out before the end and went to the newspaper office to correct my proofs. It was past midnight when I had finished, and before 7 A.M. a shorthand writer was in my bedroom taking down two more leaders from my dictation. This all ended at ten o'clock in the worst headache I have had since you left. I have been in bed all day and now stagger into my library half blind to send you this poor little letter.

January 19, 1886.

No headache this morning and a noble day's work. We are in the thick of the Income Tax Committee's work, sitting constantly with a growling public and an abusive press outside. We have to choose between a policy of preparation against Russian designs, and one of non-preparation and of scares. The menaces of Russia have forced on us a large expenditure on frontier defences and additional troops; and the income tax, always an unpopular expedient in



India, is the only just method of paying the bill. I have seen a good deal of Mr. Edwin Arnold, author of that organ-peal the "Light of Asia," of Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Tennyson,<sup>1</sup> and Remènyi, the great Hungarian violinist.

January 26.

The income tax has passed through Select Committee, and I have got every point I pressed for—amongst others the exemption of payment for insurance and deferred annuities.

February 23.

This morning brought me a very interesting letter from Mrs. H—— now in Ceylon. She writes rather bitterly against the world, its beliefs, its politics, and poor, self-seeking ways. I dashed off a short reply at the instant, lamenting that she did not feel the great calm of nature and the restfulness of hard work, which (in your absence) are my anodynes. It seemed to me, I said, that priests annoy her in England and Positivists in India (this was *apropos* of a capital speech by Mr. H. J. S. Cotton which I had sent her). I concluded by chaffing her about her sufferings from the heresy of individuality and the covetousness of continued existence, which produce the foolish sorrows of modern life. . . . My dinner party at the Uttarpara Villa last night included Mr. George Augustus Sala, who is "globe-trotting." He is the most popular English journalist of our day, showing true flashes of genius, but *au fond* a regular commercial traveller of literature. He was very brilliant at our gathering, and wrote next morning to say that he had enjoyed it immensely.

#### TO MABEL.

March 9.

Lord Dufferin landed yesterday in great state on his return from annexing Upper Burma. The path for ten yards up the river bank was covered with scarlet cloth; children strewed flowers before the conquering hero; the cannon of Fort William thundered out a royal salute, thousands of soldiers presented arms; the body-guard giants galloped before and after his carriage, and hundreds of thousands of people kept up a lusty cheer along the whole course to Government House. He, Lady Dufferin and their daughter Lady Helen, appeared surprised and touched by so magnificent a welcome.

#### TO MABEL.

UTTARPARA, March 21.

You kindest of little daughters, I have come out to this river retreat lent me by a great native landowner, to consult some rare

<sup>1</sup> He died soon afterwards of fever, nursed with "unspeakable kindness" by Lord and Lady Dufferin.



books in his library. I have the marble floors and vast pillared verandah overhanging the Hugli all to myself. The heat is rather terrible; but I get on pretty well by plunging my head into a tub every two hours and then sitting under a swinging punka. I am now beginning my last year in India, and mean to spend it well. I have laid out a programme for every hour of the day, and the *Stunden-Plan* (is that at all like the proper word, my little scholar?) is as follows:—Rise at 6.30, have a cup of tea and be at work at seven; do original writing for four hours and read authorities on the work in hand. Bathe and breakfast between eleven and twelve; then—or a little after!—till one, German. From 1 to 5 P.M. purely official work, such as helping to make laws, trying to get India more economically governed as Member of the Finance Committee, or managing my own department as Director-General of Statistics. From five to eight, riding or driving; then dinner, and after some quiet reading, to bed at eleven.

The Finance Committee alluded to was an expedient adopted by Lord Dufferin in order to lessen embarrassments which threatened the equilibrium of his budgets. He was prosecuting vast public works intended to protect the Empire against famine and safeguard its frontiers, and their cost necessitated the curtailment of expenditure in other branches. An opportunity of effecting this was offered by the approaching revision of the quinquennial contracts with the provincial governments, under which the latter received lump sums annually for the expenses of their administration. But the committee was not restricted to mere cheese-paring in these contracts. Its scope extended to every department, including the army, the railways, and the ever-growing drain on the resources of the Empire involved by the home charges. Its President was Sir Charles Elliott, K.C.S.I., then Chief Commissioner of Assam, and Hunter was amongst the members, each of whom was specially selected for his experience in finance.<sup>1</sup> The labour attending these complicated inquiries was a sensible addition to the burden laid upon Hunter by the revision of the "Imperial Gazetteer" and his duties as a legislator, and he looked forward with more than his usual longing to the cool, pure air of Simla. On the eve of starting thither he wrote:—

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Government of India, No. 649, dated 10th February 1886.



TO MRS. HUNTER.

*March 22.*

This is my last day in Calcutta, thank Heaven! So you sign yourself "Your loving husband," and then think better yet and substitute "wife." But you are indeed a husband to us all, for you bind our house together and keep us united. I go to Simla with a quiet mind. Another batch of four volumes of the Gazetteer will see the light in April. The remaining five will take time but give me little anxiety, and I start this evening without a page of arrears of any sort.

The next letter is dated from his mountain home, still redolent of her whom he loved so well.

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*March 28.*

This is the loneliest and saddest time I have ever spent. I wander from room to room, and everywhere find tender remembrances of your presence. Even the letter-book lying on your table gave me a twinge. The little table close to my library fire suggests our bézique matches and the cosy dinners of last year. However, I am going to make this season one of quiet and hard work. I will go to school again and live the student life I led when I was courting you at poor old Dean Terrace.

These resolutions were carried out, and Hunter's last year in India was given to labour as unremitting as any which he had undergone. The Finance Committee met almost daily at Simla, and he took an active share in its debates, which he strove to render of permanent value to the Empire. He wrote on the day of the preliminary meeting to Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council:—

*April 12, 1886.*

The earnest words with which Lord Dufferin announced the appointment of the committee have been generally interpreted as a pledge that there should be a searching inquiry as to the manner of conducting the administration at a less cost. Mr. Grant-Duff, in his speech of 25th March, put this idea into a popular form: "The main object of the Indian Government must be to get for the country the best possible administration at the cheapest rate. To that object all minor considerations, such as those of race and colour, must be subordinated." The revision of the provincial contracts will not suffice, for I question whether our committee will save as much thereon as the Financial Committee would



retrench at the next periodical revision. It is the nature of a committee to give a more favourable hearing to the case for local governments—always eager for more money to spend—than could be expected from the Financial Department, which is in constitutional opposition to increased local expenditure.

He went on to indicate the points which came within the scope of the committee's inquiries—amongst these the questionable necessity of maintaining a cumbrous and expensive government in Bombay, while Bengal, with four times its population, was still under a Lieutenant-Governor. Then, it was asserted, truly or falsely, that the whole standard of Indian pay is higher than that maintained in neighbouring tropical colonies. In regard to the mechanism for collecting revenue he sued for a larger infusion of the native element.

We know by experience that we could not have made a workable land-law for Bengal without the help of a native Member of Council. Notwithstanding Babu Peary Mohan Mukharji's general opposition, his knowledge of the land system was of the greatest value to us. Yet, while native judges have been admitted to all the High Courts, these races have hitherto been excluded from all the Boards of Revenue.

The Education Department offered another opportunity for drastic reform. The great Commission over which Hunter had so ably presided was of opinion that Government should gradually withdraw from maintaining High Schools and Colleges in favour of united private efforts. Could the Finance Committee, he asked, shut its eyes to the fact that two systems were in force both equally efficient, of which the one is more than four times as costly to the State as the other? He concluded by affirming that it was in the highest degree expedient that the Government should make up its mind as to the scope of the Finance Committee's inquiries before that body settled to its work.

His eager desire to render solid and lasting service finds utterance in the home letters.

TO BROUGHTON.

*April 26.*

I had intended to write you a long letter to-day, but I have had two committees and am almost speechless with exhaustion.



So pardon me, my dear son, once more this time. They have heaped work upon me which is of a very honourable nature, but causes me great anxiety. Lord Dufferin induced his Legislative Council to assent to an income-tax on the promise of a searching inquiry into possible economies. I was placed on a special committee for the purpose, to see Lord Dufferin's pledges carried out; and now I find that *quieta non movere* is the watchword. It is a difficult position, but I mean to make our inquiry a reality, whatever the others may desire.

I spent May and June at Simla, and saw as much of Hunter as his constant engagements permitted. In the brief intervals between committee meetings and batches of proof sheets he was as ready as ever to join a party of pleasure, and was the soul of every gathering to which he gave his sunny presence. And yet he was suffering, not only from overwork, but from a bitter disappointment in the little realm where all his real joys were found. Broughton, his first-born, whose constitutional weakness had been a thorn in his father's side, contracted an imprudent marriage. The letters show how Hunter's heart was wrung by this act of folly in one for whom he had hoped so much; but his friends were not permitted to lift the veil which guarded the home circle. It was said that Michael Faraday, when some one asked him how he, "a light of science, could take part weekly in the meetings of the Sandemanian sect, replied, "Some people keep a water-tight compartment in their brain." Like the great chemist, Hunter had a sanctum which none were allowed to enter. He found consolation in the budding graces of his only daughter, Mabel. Her sex appealed with double force to a father's heart, and in her brief life she showed herself worthy of him by a loving disposition and high intellectual gifts. Among the letters from his lost darling is one which shows the germ of literary power:—

FROM MABEL.

May 31.

There is no news to give you, and so you must condescend to put up with the tale of my adventures at the Weimar Telegraph Office. I had a telegram to send off to Broughton, telling him to "cheer up for Mods." It was raining and I had no umbrella (I



never take one). This is what passed between myself and the operator, who wore spectacles and was as old as the hills:—

I—"Guten Tag! I want to send this despatch to England."

He—"Don't hurry; there is *no* hurry here. Gracious Miss, you've forgotten your umbrella: you'll catch cold."

I—"Oh, dear no. I want to send this telegram to Oxford."

He—"Where is that? Ah, in England; so it is. Is it for a brother or a friend?"

I—"For my brother."

He—"What does it all mean?"

I—"It means that he is going in for an examination at college."

He—"Dear me! Do you know, a most unfortunate thing has happened. My colleague is ill with influenza, and I have to do all his work. He reckons very badly, and my wife says that I am not much better," &c. &c.

This went on for half-an-hour, but at last I got my telegram off. Then I had to pay for it. I gave the operator a twenty-mark piece, and the proper change was 11 marks 75 pfennigs. He brought a drawer full of money and laid out before me a sovereign, a half-sovereign, 3 marks and 5 pfennigs. I hinted that it was too much. He looked at me sideways, took up the money and laid down a 5-mark piece and 2 pfennigs. I remarked that *that* was too little, whereupon he handed me the drawer and told me to help myself. When I had done so he began another long speech with, "My wife always says," &c., but I cut him short with good-bye and left the place. Such is the promptitude of German officials.

The letters which the weekly mails carried home reveal every phase of the Simla life:—

TO WILLIAM.

May 31.

I sat next Lady Dufferin at dinner the other day at Government House, and had a long talk with her, and afterwards with the Viceroy. They both spoke very kindly of what I have done for India. On the table were a number of gold spurs and gold roses. The history of them is this:—Lord Dufferin's ancestors had a quarrel with the Hamiltons, who are Lady Dufferin's ancestors. So, as the Dufferin land went right up to the Hamilton castle, the Dufferins spitefully built up mean farmhouses all round the entrance to the Hamilton walls. When the feud was over, the Dufferins pulled down the cowsheds and built a splendid entrance to the Hamilton château, on condition that the head of the Hamiltons should present every Christmas Day to the lady of the chief of the Dufferins a gold spur or a gold rose in pledge of friendship. Now the daughter of the Hamiltons is Lady



Dufferin: so the head of her family presents alternately to her a gold rose or a gold spur every Christmas Day. You ask if I am to be knighted for the "Imperial Gazetteer." Well, I have been a Companion of the two Indian Orders for years; and most people think that I should have had the Knight-Commandership of the Star of India on the Queen's birthday. In public life one is so accustomed to see "Honours dealt as if in joke, and brave desert unkindly smitten," that I never allow myself to calculate on such things. But if I cannot be sure of honours, I can at least deserve them, and that is, after all, the happiest thing in life.

#### TO WILLIAM.

I have just finished a long article for the new *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, under terrible pressure as to time. I sat up the whole of last night and wrote thirty pages of print in twenty-four hours. However, it is a subject which goes to my heart—the wrongs of the Indian child-widow—and I wrote *con amore*.

The fruits of this great effort delighted the reader of Mr. Demetrius Boulger's Review in the following October. It was a noble plea for a class which demands the heart-felt sympathy of every civilised human being, and began:—

In a Bengali novel depicting village life fifty years ago, there is a very beautiful portraiture of a Hindoo widow. Left in bereavement while still a child, condemned by the shackles of caste to lifelong penance, her woman's warm instincts strangled by priestly superstition, denied forever the natural happiness of married love, and forbidden the hopes of maternity, she devotes herself with an exquisite piety to soothing the sorrows of others, becomes the mother and saint of the neighbourhood while she lives, and is worshipped as a village goddess when she dies. Clad in her widow's garment, having bathed before sunrise, she serves out rice with the household wooden spoon to hundreds of the hungry in her courtyard, touching no food herself, nor drinking a drop of water till three parts of the day are spent.

This sad-eyed but beautiful figure, harmonising the sweet saintliness of a Madam Guyon with the active benevolence of an Elizabeth Fry, has given place to a very different portrait in Bengali tales and poems of the rising school. The child-widow flits through many such stories, a silent girl-spectre in coarse weeds, her hair dishevelled, her beauty blotted out by disfigurements, always solitary, excluded from every festival and social gathering, a black spot of lifelong affliction in her family, and a visible symbol of God's wrath. "Delight and sorrow are all the same to her for all time to come. The twelve months of the year, with their



seasons of rejoicing to the rest of mankind, form to her one unbroken round of misery." Well for the girl-widow if this cruel denial of every youthful pleasure and of all lawful love only ends in starving into inanition her woman's nature!

How is a foreigner to decide between these two portraiture? The truth seems to be that the child-widow is coming to be regarded from a new point of view in Indian literature. Formerly she was the saint of the family; now she is the martyr of circumstances. The willing ascetic, whose sole business was to prepare for the next world, has become an innocent victim, defrauded of her rights of citizenship in the present world. She no longer figures as a devotee bearing with a pathetic resignation her self-imposed restraints, but rather as a poor prisoner pining through life under a weight of fetters riveted on her by others.

Her lifelong bondage found no warrant in the Hindu Scriptures. Like Sati, or the self-immolation of the widow on her husband's funeral pyre, it was a custom ingrafted in the Aryan social code from contact with non-Aryan tribes, who inherited the Scythian sacrifice of concubine, horse, and slaves on the tomb of the dead chief. Sati had been swept away by enlightened British rule; but the girl betrothed in infancy to a man whom she never saw was still condemned as his widow to a lifelong servitude far worse than death. Hindu society, Hunter sadly admitted, was not prepared for legislation in her favour; but the leaven of English education was at work. The article was reprinted by Mr. Malabari of Bombay, one of the leaders of the party of reform, and it has given a powerful stimulus to a movement which is working untold good in many a Hindu household.

The crowning work of Hunter's Indian career was fast approaching its consummation. At the end of July 1886 he presented five additional volumes of the "Gazetteer of India" to the Viceroy, who wrote:—

FROM THE EARL OF DUFFERIN.

*July 27.*

I have again to thank you for a beautiful present, which is a noble monument of your industry, talent, and intelligence. I am proud that it should have been completed in my Viceroyalty.

Five more were passing through the press at Edinburgh, and the indefatigable author urged that the long delays entailed by the transit of proof sheets between Europe and India



might be curtailed were he able to supervise the issue at home. Two months' privilege leave was due to him, and he was permitted to employ them in the manner sought.<sup>1</sup>

This hurried flight homewards implied the breaking up of the Simla home. Stirling Castle was let preparatory to sale, and its master wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*August 20.*

People have been very kind to me since I gave up my house, and I have had four invitations from friends to stay with them. I had no idea that they really cared for me here till now. For the first week I buried my head in the Longwood Hotel Cottage at the foot of Elysium Hill, and cleared off all arrears. Then I went to General Chesney,<sup>2</sup> for a few days, and now I am with Sir Theodore Hope for my last week.

From Kalka, at the foot of the Simla hills, he wrote:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

*August 27.*

Here I am, trying to write my home letters in air so charged with moisture at ninety-two degrees that the punka's movement scatters my papers without giving me any relief. But I am on my first stage to you, and I feel supremely happy. Before leaving I had a most satisfactory interview with Lord Dufferin, who has given me some work of a highly confidential character to do in England. This may compel me to dash straight through to London with the mails. He also told me that he was about to recommend me to the Queen for a Knight-Commandership, and that, unless I really wished to continue here, I should, he thought, have a more distinguished career at home.

Three weeks remained ere he could start for London, which is deserted in September. They were employed in a tour of 2000 miles, carried out at the height of the rainy season. Leaving Simla on 26th August, Hunter cooled himself for three days at the hill station of Masuri. There he inspected

<sup>1</sup> Indian officers are entitled to a month's holiday every year, which they may accumulate up to a maximum of three months, and may add it to ordinary furlough. As "a very special case" this concession was to date from Hunter's arrival at Aden.

<sup>2</sup> He was then Military Member of Council. He wrote "Indian Polity," and had a deserved reputation for acumen and military knowledge. He died in 1895.



the civil engineering college at Rurki, and struck northwards to Hardwár, in order to see the Ganges in flood at the point whence it issues from the hills. A couple of quiet days with Lady Lyall at Naini Tal, and a visit to some agricultural colonies in the Central Provinces, brought him to Bombay on 14th September. On 3rd October we find him again installed in his quarters at Dover Street, London, after a sixty hours' journey with the mails from Brindisi, during which the passengers never halted for more than a few minutes, and were fed with cold meat thrust in at the carriage windows.<sup>1</sup>

He was more than ever eager that Mrs. Hunter should accompany him back to India, but on learning from his second son at Eton that her presence was necessary to the children's happiness at home, he unselfishly yielded, and, much against the grain, resolved to return alone.<sup>2</sup> That it should be the last of these separations was now a foregone conclusion. He wrote from Messrs. Trübner's office:—

TO MRS. HUNTER.

October 14.

I had hoped to get some rest this week, now that Broughton and his wife have settled down at Oxford. But on my return from visiting Willie at Eton I received an order for three articles for *The Times*. This was an un hoped-for piece of luck, as it opened up a new career; but it has plunged me into a sea of labour. I am at Printing House Square every day to consult with the editor, and then hard at work writing in my Dover Street sanctum. I have also had to revise and pass for the press 340 pages of the "*Imperial Gazetteer*" since my return to England.

These contributions to the leading journal dealt with the plight of the child-widow on lines altogether distinct from those of the *Asiatic Quarterly* article, and told the story of the subjugation of Burmah, perhaps the greatest of the many services rendered to his country by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.<sup>3</sup> They are memorable not only for the style and matter,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter, dated 3rd October 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mrs. Hunter, dated 10th October 1886.

<sup>3</sup> The *Times* of 15th, 16th, and 21st October 1886. Lord Dufferin wrote: "Nothing could have been more temperate, fair, and accurate than your exposition of our troubles in Upper Burmah."



but because they were the first-fruits of a connection with journalism in its highest development which was destined to change the current of their writer's career.

On the following day he started India-wards, and, after a few happy hours at the Weimar home, he sped onwards to Brindisi, and embarked on the *Assam* for Bombay on 14th November. Thence he wrote :—

TO MABEL.

November 14.

I had a glorious sail yesterday in an open boat, with a dear old white-bearded fisherman. The other passengers thought the wind too high and would not join me. We scudded along the Italian coast with its castles, towns, promontories, cathedral spires and olive-clad hills. At one narrow passage it took me an hour's tacking to make half-a-mile in the teeth of the wind. Then a long, fast sail round sunny bays, and, finally, a splendid spin back to the *Assam* with the wind behind and the spray dashing over the gunwale. I have made a charming acquaintance on board in Mrs. Martin of Bombay, who is a daughter of Colonel Thackeray, and, I believe, a niece of our great novelist. She had read my "Calcutta Graves" in the *Englishman*, and enjoyed the description of the Indian Thackerays. She told me that one of the great Bombay ladies had asked another whether she ought to call on her (Mrs. Martin)—"Because, you know, she is the daughter (!) of a publisher; a man called Thackeray. Bombay lady No. 2 was rather better informed, and replied: "Oh no, he was not a publisher, but made books himself. Don't you know 'Vanity Fair,' my dear?" No. 1.—"Of course, I see it every week on the Club table when the mails come in." She meant the society paper!

At Aden, he found a long letter from Sir Courteney Ilbert, who was about to lay down his high office of Legal Member of Council, announcing that Hunter was to succeed him as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. Matters of grave importance awaited his consideration, including the establishment of a University for Northern India at Allahabad, and the affiliation of Bengal Colleges with Cambridge. These new duties made his retirement in the spring a matter of doubt, but he resolved that, were he detained, his wife and daughter should join him.

On reaching Calcutta he wrote :—



TO MRS. HUNTER.

*December 15.*

I stayed but one day at Bombay, and saw the Governor and all sorts and conditions of men. Lord Reay wished me to remain a week, but this was impossible. It was the morning after the St. Andrew's dinner. I found the western metropolis looking much the worse for toddy and late hours, with its head enveloped in wet towels, writing out its speeches of the previous evening for the newspapers. Thackeray used to say that the best dinner jokes he ever made were concocted in bed just twelve hours too late. But Indian reporters are a lazy tribe, and always expect a verbatim copy of after-dinner speeches from the orators themselves. If the novelist had lived here, he would have avoided regrets for lost opportunities by inserting his matutinal flashes in the written speech. The railway company gave me a special saloon to Calcutta, and I enjoyed a peaceful sixty hours in the train after having rushed about all day in the sun and lunched at the Yacht Club with too enthusiastic friends.

*December 16, 1886.*

This is a very busy week with me. I have meetings of Council, of the University Syndicate and Senate, besides endless interviews with the Presidents of the four Faculties, who are assisting me to make up my list of the new Fellows.

*January 11, 1887.*

I got through Convocation on Saturday very comfortably. The Viceroy, Chief Justice, Lieutenant-Governor, and everybody else were there, and it was the largest concourse of dignitaries seen for many years. Lord Dufferin complimented me warmly on my speech, and on Sunday I had quite a levée of native gentlemen, who agreed in pronouncing this the most memorable Convocation since Sir H. S. Maine's in 1864.

The address was, in the main, a powerful argument for technical education under University auspices. Great Britain is handicapped in the race for industrial supremacy by the want of appliances for teaching the useful arts, and India's case is incomparably worse. Her ancient seats of empire furnish artificers whose right hand has not lost its cunning. But the teeming millions of Bengal are still wedded to an overtasked soil. The Calcutta University is still a mere examining body, which yearly adds thousands to the crowded professions of law and journalism. It has no faculty of applied science, no workshops for practical training in the arts. Had



Hunter's counsels been taken to heart, our greatest province would long since have been studded with technical schools.<sup>1</sup> He followed up his Convocation address by placing his services at the disposal of the Viceroy for framing a comprehensive scheme of technical education. He offered to devote six months' furlough to inquiries into the methods adopted with this end in England and Germany. He would then have enlisted the co-operation of the State departments and private employers of labour in India, and furnished a report as a basis of action.<sup>2</sup>

Further negotiations took place between the Viceroy and his subordinate. On 29th January Hunter developed his proposals in a letter to the Home Secretary, which ended :—

The three great objects which I have before me are, first, to place the Government in possession of a comprehensive survey of the existing demand for technically-trained labour; secondly, to state the methods by which that demand may be met in each province; thirdly, to submit a general plan of as great a degree of unity and simplicity as varying local circumstances permit.

Unhappily for India this project was not adopted, and a chance was lost which will never recur of securing a well-devised and thoroughly practical system for developing the dormant faculties of a vast population.

In the midst of his toils and anxieties he found time to keep his family posted in all that interested him. To Mabel he wrote on 18th January :—

My sweetest of daughters, I have despatched letters to all the family and eleven other correspondents by this mail, so that I feel like a sponge which has been left on the window-sill to dry. Instead of wearying you with the half-baked biscuit of my brain, I send you a poem by Sir Alfred Lyall, who now governs North-Western India :—

<sup>1</sup> This address induced me to found a Technical School at Rangpur, a large district of Northern Bengal, which was under my care in 1888-91. The rules framed for its management were printed and circulated to my colleagues, but the Education Department was too bent on literary training to countenance the new venture. Very little has been done by Government to meet an obvious want.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Sir Donald Mackenzie-Wallace, private secretary to the Viceroy, dated 20th February 1887.



## CHARLES'S WAIN.

## 1.

In the early Spring, as the nights grow shorter,  
Some clear cold eve when the clouds are high,  
Just as you're going to bed, my daughter,  
Linger, and look at the northern sky.

## 2.

There you will see, if the stars you're wise in,  
Over the edge of the darkened plain,  
One by one in the heavens uprising  
The seven bright beacons of Charles's Wain.

## 3.

All the night long you may watch them turning  
Round in their course by the polar star ;  
Slowly they sink, and at dawn are burning  
Low on the line of the world afar.

## 4.

Often they guide me, by dim tracks wending  
In the evening late to an Indian tent ;  
Or the stars, as I wake, are to earth descending,  
Just as they touch it the night is spent.

## 5.

Then as they dip I may take their warning,  
Saddle and ride in the silent air ;  
Swiftly they vanish, and cometh the morning,  
Cometh the day with its noise and glare.

## 6.

But the Wain's last lustre fitfully glances  
O'er shadowy camels who softly pace,  
On the watchman's fire and the horsemen's lances,  
Or a wayside mere, and a still wan face.

## 7.

Thus when you look at the seven stars yonder,  
Think, nor, in years that will come, forget,  
Here in the dark how often I wander,  
Sleep when they rise, and start as they set.

## 8.

In the West there is clanging of bells from the steeple,  
Ringing of bells and rushing of train,  
In the East the journeys of simple people  
Are timed and lighted by Charles's Wain.



TO MRS. HUNTER.

*February 8.*

Here I am, at the last day of my tour, and with the very last page of the "Imperial Gazetteer," Volume XIII., lying before me in type, and with my order to print off written in the margin. I started on Monday the 31st January, my barge being towed up by steamer 166 miles to Murshidabad, where I arrived on Wednesday night. I spent two days with the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, the descendant of the Mughal Viceroys from whom we took the country, and returned to my house at Uttarpara, after two days' towing down stream, on Sunday morning. There I had a busy day, and then started afresh in the evening on a driving tour, to examine by land the ancient settlements of ruined cities which I had inspected from the river the previous week. On Sunday evening I drove nine miles up to Serampur in my mail phaeton, dined and slept with the Magistrate, Gerald Ritchie. On Monday forenoon his wife, *née* Thackeray, showed me over the sights and antiquities of that old Danish settlement. In the afternoon I drove on to Hugli, above Bengal fourteen miles, examining various interesting sites, temples, and towns by the way. A Brother of the Order of the Holy Ghost showed me carefully over the French Settlement, Chandernagore. Then I passed through the ancient Dutch Settlement of Chinsura, and the Portuguese capital at Hugli to Bandel, the oldest church in India, dating back to 1599. This forenoon I have spent six hours in examining the site of the ancient royal port of Mahammadan Bengal. Now I have to drive back to Serampur in my phaeton for the night, fourteen miles.

The Queen-Empress's first Jubilee, which fell this year, was celebrated in India on 17th February, while the weather was still cool enough for hearty manifestations of loyalty. It was the occasion of a shower of honours, and Hunter at last received a substantial recognition of his life's work for the Empire. His first thought on finding himself a Knight-Commander of the Star of India was for her who had done so much to further his noble ambitions. He wrote to Lady Hunter by the following mail:—

*February 22, 1887.*

I am glad for your sake that the K.C.S.I. came all right last week. You have richly earned, by long help to me in my work, any personal distinction that I can earn for you. The thing that has pleased me most is the astonishing number of friends and admirers whom I suddenly find that I possess in this country. Many of the letters, such as that from Herbert Finlay and others (old allies), were to "Lady Hunter." I have received, so far, 187



letters and telegrams, or about thirty a day, from all conditions of men—from the Viceroy, governors of provinces, and the native princes of great territories, down to little rural municipalities, Christian missionaries, Sanskrit pandits, Mahammadan Maulvis, poor clerks, and humble teachers in village schools. Of course there is much jealousy and some wrath among the seniors of my service who have received no honour whatever. But I am amazed and touched by the numerous expressions of goodwill even from the seniors who have been passed over.

About this time he had a characteristic letter from M. Reményi, the Hungarian violinist, to whom he had shown great hospitality during a tour round the world. It ran:—

FROM M. E. REMÉNYI.

This is only to make you remember that such a being still exists, who goes by the name of Ed. Reményi, and who wants to prove to you that he has your kindness in an extra box of his memory. Since I left you, I have been travelling through India, Ceylon, Straits, China, Japan (a grand country, which unfortunately will be soon, much too soon, brought down to our commonplace level—what a pity!). It is a country of charm. There is no such thing as a vulgar, common Japanese [in our sense. The coolie has his inborn grace—and the Japanese women! Our duchesses, the best of them, could go to school to learn ladylike behaviour from them. But it is useless for one to go on in this way and try and give you a description of a country which would require volumes to do justice to her artistic skill. The common joiner is an artist. They are an organically artistic people—unconscious, and therefore perfect (from an artistic point of view). I have just finished my book on Japan, which will be published in 8 to 10 months; when published, you will have a copy sent to you by the fiddler-author. Now, good-bye, my dear Dr. Hunter. If you would drop me a line—or 100,000 lines—it will reach me at Cape Town. I go on working at Indian music, but it is a hard nut to crack, and I stand before its complicated complexity in awe, and very often like a stupid fellow.

The approaching completion of the "Imperial Gazetteer" put a seal to Hunter's lifework for India, and left him free to recruit his exhausted energies in a more congenial climate. He obtained six months' furlough, with a half-formed resolve to return no more to the East. On 13th March he left the Uttarpara villa for Simla, and broke his journey thither at Allahabad to bid farewell to his friends the Lyalls. Ten days



were spent in packing up his splendid library for transit home; and he saw the Hill capital for the last time on 27th March. Four days later he arrived at Bombay, whence he communicated to the Viceroy's Private Secretary the strictures which he felt bound to offer on the manner in which the Finance Committee had dealt with State Education. Such commissions as these are, he wrote :—

TO SIR D. M. WALLACE.

March 31, 1887.

in reality transitional methods of popular representation, means of discovering where the shoe pinches, and effective buffers between the expression of public opinion and its impact on the Central Government. The Finance Committee, in my humble opinion, drifted away from Lord Dufferin's noble words uttered in the Legislative Council. It became too exclusively the instrument of the Financial Department in the revision of provincial contracts.

On the morrow he embarked on the ill-fated *Tasmania* homeward bound, and quitted for ever a land which he had served with such heart-whole devotion.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE RETURN TO ENGLISH LIFE

AT Suez Hunter left the *Tasmania*, thus escaping the shipwreck suffered by her passengers off Corsica,<sup>1</sup> and, crossing the desert by rail, embarked in the *Nizam* for Brindisi. From the Mediterranean he wrote to Lady Hunter:—

I am full of schemes for work. During this voyage I have plodded through 120 pages of German grammar, in order to have a better knowledge of two subjects—Indian and Continental affairs.

He travelled to Weimar by way of Venice and the St. Gothard, and found the home circle complete. It was a very happy party, and the first days after his return were given up to cultivating the family affections. Little did he know that the shadow of death lay on the group that gathered round the table at Alexanders Platz, and that it would meet no more unbroken on this side the grave.

He now plunged with zeal into the homely pleasures of life in a German residenz. His first care was to provide himself with horseflesh, and many were the journeyings to Gotha, Leipzig, and Frankfurt, to inspect some heavy Holsteiner or black short-necked Prussian steed. At last he pitched upon a big brown pair, yclept "Prince" and "Prussia," which cost no more than £100, and, after a little schooling, they performed to their owner's satisfaction in saddle and harness. Lady Hunter had made many friends at Weimar, and all, from the old Grand Duke downwards, were eager to do honour to the distinguished stranger. He learnt something of German manners from the circle in which he was thrown,

<sup>1</sup> The *Tasmania* ran into shoal water off Corsica on the night of 17th April 1887. Twenty-three lives were lost, including the Captain's, and the survivors suffered terribly from cold and exposure before they were rescued.



and was amused by the contrast with our own. On the first Sunday after his arrival the Court Church was attended by all Weimar, headed by its amiable sovereign, but the afternoon was given up to horse-racing.

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

June 13, 1887.

Since returning to Europe, my head-quarters have been Weimar, which still retains its literary and artistic traditions. Goethe, indeed, has left no *alter aut secundus*, either here or in the world, but Lassen has succeeded Liszt as Kapelmeister, and the Grand Duke's Court is as hospitable as ever to Englishmen. One of the most charming of its ladies is the younger Princess Wittgenstein, who speaks with enthusiasm of your excellency. Weimar continues to be the resort of many men who have won distinction in letters or in public life. Among them we have Admiral Batsch, who practically created the German navy. I find it very pleasant to be able to cut a year out of middle life, and, after an arid period of putting perpetually forth what I know, to begin again as a learner. Germany is still in its early outbreak of enthusiastic nationality. On a horseback tour through Thuringia I found the rocks inscribed with her great victories in letters of gold. Every German feels himself a taller man than his father, and, although his self-complacency has an offensive side, it is not of a very aggressive sort.

Another *Reisebild* of this trip is given in a letter from Rudolstadt.

TO LADY HUNTER.

June 5, 1887.

The horses go well, and my Uhlan groom is careful and intelligent. My asthma is already better. Mabel would have been amused at the scene in the gasthaus here last night. The company consisted of a huge red-faced man, a substantial farmer, I fancied; a commercial traveller, who wanted to sell chemicals to the Fabrik, with a customer whom he was treating; and the head of a travelling show. I passed the latter on my way hither, riding on an old white horse behind his waggon, out of which some half-dressed females, with their hair about their ears, were gazing disconsolately at the long straight road before them. But in mine inn the showman was an artist. He sipped his beer rather apart, and was ready to chatter about *kunst* when he could get any one to listen to him. How many pots of beer the rubicund farmer had stowed away before I came to supper at eight, I know not. But after four more he grew critical, and declared that the stuff



was quite warm. At the fifth he grew indignant, and said he was quite ready to wait till some ice was brought from Weimar. At the sixth he propounded a scheme for altering the inn in order to keep the beer cool. Yet another *seidel* and he became forgiving, and said he must get home, so the landlady and her two stout maids hoisted him into his white wicker cart, tied the reins firmly in front, and, with many "prrs, prrs," started the concern down a steep hill on its homeward route. At every *seidel* the red-faced man had solemnly raised his fist and ejaculated "prosit"; and, as the horse and cart zigzagged down the hill, he sat helpless but benevolent, murmuring "prosit" till he was out of hearing.

On 12th June Hunter regretfully left these homely pleasures for the turmoil of London, where the Index of the "Imperial Gazetteer" was going through the press. After a week of proof sheets, he went to Cambridge to receive the honorary degree of LL.D., awarded to him by the University for distinguished literary merit. He was the guest of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Charles Taylor, and on 20th June the Public Orator proclaimed his merits in diction worthy of Cicero:—

Sive Indiæ totius historiam uno in libello contextit; sive Indorum de linguis vetustis disputat, sive Orissæ rura late pererrat, seu Provinciæ Bengalensis Annales evolvit, seu proconsulis magni vitam morte immaturâ abrepti describit, ubique scriptorem elegantem, eruditum, eloquentem agnoscimus.

One or two anecdotes picked up during this stay at Cambridge were repeated to his daughter Mabel, then in her sixteenth year, whose health was beginning to cause serious concern to her doting parents.

I am terribly distressed to hear that you are suffering so much. What can I do for you? I wonder if you will be amused by some stories? The Head of a College told me of an excellent clergyman who had four portionless and unwedded daughters. "At any rate," said a cheerful friend, "they are great resources for your old age." "True," replied the anxious father, "but I should like to husband my resources." I heard another anecdote of a daughter from the Vice-Chancellor. She told her father, who was a great mathematician, that she had had an offer from one of the dons, and asked whether she should accept it. "My dear," he replied, "on this important subject you must consult your own heart. All I can say is, that you will not find a man in the whole University who knows as much about the integral calculus as Mr. Blank."



Soon afterwards he learnt from Lady Hunter that the poor girl had undergone a painful operation, but he was still ignorant of the doom which hung over her. Every day brought a letter from him to the sick-bed. On 14th July he wrote:—

TO MISS MABEL HUNTER.

I am in bed to-day with a vile attack of asthma, instead of travelling northwards to the Huttons, but I am so happy. For last night I made it certain that I should not have to return to England in November, but remain quietly with you at Weimar. I was all day at the India Office, and then, till quite late in the evening, with the editor of *The Times*. He has agreed to certain proposals which will afford me the scope for which I wished for putting forth my views about the "India of the Queen." Yesterday's letter reassured me a little about my darling daughter. The dressing of the wound must be very painful for some time yet, but every throb that the poor nerves now endure is a throb of healing, for it is nature's effort to restore the damage that has been done. I feel sure that, with the complete rest which lies before her, my little daughter will grow up into a strong and healthy woman.

Pressing business connected with his father's estate called him to Hawick at this crisis. He spent some anxious days there, and went northward to Edinburgh on the same errand. But the news from Wilhelmshöhe, whither Mabel had been carried for change of air, became so ominous that he crossed from Leith to Hamburg on 27th July, and hurried to the bedside of her on whom such high hopes had centred. Then he learnt for the first time that there was absolutely no hope. Her malady was blood poisoning, and its progress was so rapid that the gentle sufferer's hours were numbered. On 2nd August he sat beside her the livelong day in mute despair while the young life was ebbing away. Her last words were a whispered injunction to the nurse, "If I die in this sleep, sister, tell them how I loved them;" and at seven in the evening the pure spirit fled. The blow crushed her parents to the earth, and sad indeed was their return to Weimar, bearing the coffin of her who had been "the dearest, sweetest, and most valued child of the house." She was buried on 5th August in the most beautiful part of the peaceful cemetery. When the healing



hand of time had poured balm on the father's wounds he described the scene, which was never far from his thoughts.

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

*September 13, 1887.*

Our only and beloved daughter is dead. She was a girl of rare beauty and genius, excelling in all external graces, a fearless rider, a talented musician, an accomplished linguist. As she lay dying, the official report came from the Conservatorium placing her first as a violinist among the students of both sexes, and greatly her seniors in age. But her tender and noble heart was her chief charm. Never was an English girl so widely beloved in a foreign land. More than a hundred people came unasked to the funeral, from the representative of the Grand Duchess to the wrinkled applewomen who sit under their umbrellas in the market. Her grave was filled with wreaths and flowers, chiefly from quite poor people. I had been looking forward to her company as the reward of my long exile; now she is gone, and youth has left our home for ever. My poor wife has suffered terribly, and we intend breaking up our establishment here and returning to England next month.

He sought relief from "sorrow's crown of sorrow" in hard work, but he sought it long in vain. He would sit for hours before a blank sheet, pen in hand, in gloomy abstraction. The diary relates:—

*20th August.*—Very low spirits. I try to rouse myself by riding with Willie and little Campbell, who are a great comfort to us.

*1st September.*—Got to my "Old Missionary" again. Sent the India Office a distribution list of the "Imperial Gazetteer," the whole fourteen volumes with index having left the press, and asked the Secretary of State's permission to resign the Civil Service.

*3rd September.*—Reading Horace and Thucydides daily with Willie, and am giving him and Campbell two essays a week, which I carefully revise with them.

This resource failed him when the close of the holidays sent his young companions to England. He found the pretty home at Alexanders Platz terribly empty and desolate, and began to pack up for England. It is probable that his choice of a place wherein to settle was made about this time, as the result of a letter from Professor Max Müller, in reply to one announcing the crushing blow which had darkened the happy home.



FROM PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER.

*August 15, 1887.*

I know what it is. I have felt it twice myself—losing first a daughter of fifteen who was quite my own, and then another who had been a happy wife for two years. Life is changed, or rather we have learnt what life is, and which we often forget—a short interval only. I drown my thoughts in work, and if one feels that some good may come of it, that is a help. Come to Oxford. You will find plenty of occupation there, now that Monier-Williams is gone. I have tried to do what little I can for the Indian Civil candidates, but I have not much time to spare for them. You will be of immense use to such, as well as to the Indians who come to us, and who, I am sorry to say, do not seem to benefit much by their stay at Oxford.

The workings of genius find their fullest scope under the stimulus of strong emotions. It is a remarkable fact that Hunter's most brilliant literary work was planned at this time of deep distress. That his early resolution to be the annalist of British India then took shape is rendered clear by a letter from the scholarly editor of the *Allahabad Pioneer*.

FROM MR. G. M. CHESNEY.

*September 25, 1887.*

It is good news that you have made up your mind to the "History of British India." I gather that you mean to deal with the British period, and am glad that this is so. The historian of the earlier ages can never hope to address any but a very limited audience, even in India itself. Until the arrival of Baber, it always seems to me that there is no human interest in the chronicles of India, and even with the Moghuls the writer has to keep so many lines going, that no skill can prevent the whole surface being overlaid with a mass of insignificant names—Khans, Nawabs, Princes, Generals, Viziers, whose schemes have left as much impression as those of the ants on the tree outside. In the British period you have one of the most interesting pieces of history in the world, daily more appreciated as such, and no predecessor but Mill, who, with all his power, is grossly unjust both to his countrymen and to the natives, and, moreover, is quite out of date. So that if this is the task you have appointed yourself, I believe that all India at least will thank you, and for my own part I sincerely hope that you may continue in the strength necessary to carry out so laborious a work.



The months that followed this cruel bereavement also witnessed his greatest effort as a journalist, in a memorable series of articles for *The Times* on the "India of the Queen." The source is to be found in a monograph on the "Ruin of Aurungzib," which was published in the *Contemporary Review* of May 1887. It is a telling indictment of the policy of reaction, and proves that the wreck of the Mughal Empire was due to the attempt made by a fanatic in the purple to put back the clock of history. Its leading thought is expressed in a letter from its author to Mr. Malabari of Bombay: "Our rule can be stable only if it rests upon the goodwill and is supported by the co-operation of the people." These noble words were the text of *The Times* articles: "My fundamental idea," he told his Bombay correspondent, "is a united India, but one united no longer by mere force, but by the gradual recognition of the rights and aspirations of the people." The "India of the Queen" was begun and concluded during the last three weeks of October in the turmoil of dismantling the cherished home at Weimar and packing up for the move to Oxford.<sup>1</sup> The series of five articles appeared in *The Times* between 4th November and 8th December following. They sketch the changes which had occurred in India and in the relations between that Empire and her suzerain during the half century of the Queen Empress's reign. These changes are grouped round three statesmen, whose policy reflects the current of national thought. In Lord Dalhousie we had the Conqueror, whose work culminated in that great landmark of Indian history, the Mutiny of 1857, because it was a premature attempt at centralisation, while the material means of securing unity were as yet non-existent. In Lord Lawrence was shown the Consolidator, who gathered up the threads of administration broken by that mighty cataclysm. Lord Mayo, again, was the Conciliator, who did much in his brief career to bind up the wounds of civil strife and reconcile the princes and people of India to an alien rule. In the concluding sections, entitled "The New Leaven" and "Whither," the forces swaying modern

<sup>1</sup> The diary runs: "Our last night at Alexanders Platz. Our poor butler Engel has been in fits of tears the whole evening, and is hardly able to wait at table." Hunter was adored by his German servants.



Indian life were enunciated with convincing precision. On the one hand we have a teeming peasant proletariat, grossly ignorant, easily stirred by appeals to their fanaticism, and ever haunted by the spectre of famine. On the other is a compact body of native agitators, the offspring of cheap English education, who are steeped to the lips in Western political shibboleths, and ignorant of mankind and of the practical difficulties of government. The situation is pregnant with danger if it be unskilfully handled, but much may be hoped from the strength and rectitude of the British people. The Queen's reign, he wrote, found the people of India a collection of heterogeneous races. It has moulded them into the beginnings of a nation.

These utterances were taken to heart by the leaders of the Congress movement, which, as we shall see presently, owes whatever result it has achieved to Hunter's influence with the British public. In them, too, we find the origin of nearly every reform which has tended to knit the Indian Empire together in the bonds of sympathy. But for the change in opinion wrought by these eloquent essays, the Councils of India would not have been placed on a representative basis. The huge, ill-trained forces of the feudatory chiefs would not have been utilised for Imperial defence, and our fellow-subjects in the East might never have secured representation in the House of Commons.

The "India of the Queen" thus launched on a successful career, its author bade farewell to Weimar with its memories of lost joys and buried love. He reached London on 3rd November, and as soon as the phaeton and pair arrived from Germany he drove Lady Hunter to Oxford, where the too brief remainder of his days was to be spent. Here his son Broughton and his wife were residing while the former was studying for the ministry at Balliol, and, in spite of his first-born's failing health, the father found consolation in the young people's society. While casting about him for a home, he occupied one at "Marchfield," which became a trysting-place for those who moulded the inner life of the great University. His most frequent companions were such men as Jowett, Professor Max Müller, Sir William Anson, Sir John Conroy, Mr. Strachan-Davidson, and Professor A. A. MacDonell; and many were the country drives undertaken with congenial



spirits in disregard of a none too genial winter climate. On 6th December he laid the foundation of a close connection with Balliol by lecturing there to a large audience on "A River of Ruined Capitals"—a description of the Hugli which enabled his hearers to realise the changes wrought by time and the irresistible forces of nature working in the tropics. At the close of 1887 he had a full budget of Simla news from Mrs. Lockwood Kipling, with whose brilliant family he became intimate during the last season of his stay at the hill capital. She sent him a poem by her famous son, and asked his help towards its publication. The correspondence between them reads curiously in the light of subsequent history.

From MRS. KIPLING.

LAHORE, *November 29, 1887.*

Rudyard, who has left Lahore for a three months' tour in Rajputana, Central India, and I know not where besides, has given me the enclosed poem, asking me to send it to you. I have no hesitation in troubling you with it, because I am sure that if you do not care for it you will not scruple to say so. The result of his present journey will take shape in course of time. Thacker and Spink are bringing out a book of stories for him,<sup>1</sup> and there is a demand for a third edition of the "Departmental Ditties." He has strengthened and grown intellectually during the past year, and a career appears to be fair before him. My daughter and I spent the whole season at Simla, and were among the many who much regretted your absence. The old order is changing rapidly, and the past year was one of those of transition that make one realise how much Anglo-Indian society resembles the shifting sands of the desert; the atoms are ever moving and vanishing, but always to be imperceptibly replaced, so that to the superficial eye there is no gap.

Hunter pointed a useful moral when he wrote soon afterwards to the brilliant young author:—

To MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.

*July 1888.*

Your mother sent me some time ago a printed proof of a poem from your hand, with a request to obtain a place for it in a

<sup>1</sup> The rare first edition of "Plain Tales from the Hills," which appeared in 1887.



magazine or review. I did my best, but the poem has been returned me on the ground that its flight was above the ordinary British reader. I have also received your little pasquinade in the *Pioneer* sent to my address. It is, I think, to be regretted that you devote to clever trifles of this sort talents which are capable of much better things. They practically fix your standard at that of the gymkhana and mess-room, and give point to the Philistines' sneer, "See how these literary men love one another!" As regards myself, I know what my work in life is, and I turn neither to the left nor right for praise or blame. Twenty years ago I saw what that work was—first to enable England to learn India's needs, next to help England to think fairly of India, and finally to make the world feel the beauty and pathos of Indian life. The first I have accomplished, the second I am effecting, and the third I hope also in due time to bring about. Those who look upon the realities of life as a mere show may occasionally wound my feelings, but they will not alter my purpose.

On 24th February 1888, Hunter delivered an address before the Society of Arts on "The Religions of India." The Earl of Northbrook, who presided at the meeting, said with truth that it would have been impossible to select a more difficult subject; for theology was tabooed by the Society, and a single injudicious remark by the lecturer would have provoked a heated debate. This thorny topic was handled with consummate skill, and every characteristic in the beliefs which form so overwhelming a factor in Indian life was presented to the audience in a manner which enlisted their sympathies and disarmed opposition. Hunter's main conclusion was that the highly organised creeds did not offer an extended scope to missionary effort, but that a dense and dark mass of fifty millions of human beings, lying beyond the pale of orthodox Hinduism and Islam, were amenable to proselytising influences. He concluded by affirming that it was our duty to give these outcasts the benefits of a religion to which we owed so much:—

It is not permitted to a lecturer here to speak as the advocate of any creed. But on this, as on every platform in England, it is allowed to a man to speak as an Englishman. And, speaking as an Englishman, I declare my conviction that missionary enterprise is the highest modern expression of the world-wide national life of our race. I regard it as the spiritual complement of England's instinct for colonial expansion and imperial rule. And I believe that any falling-off in England's missionary efforts will be a sure sign of swiftly coming national decay.



These glowing words made a profound impression on his hearers, one of whom wrote on the following day :—

FROM SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

*February 25, 1888.*

The tact with which you treated your subject was little short of miraculous. It bristled with difficulties on every hand, and while you avoided them you never concealed your personal beliefs, sympathies and aspirations. In this way you have instinctively constituted your paper as an arsenal for the defence of Christian Missions, and it will always be quoted when they are under discussion. . . . I regret, however, the poor attendance, although it was remarkably good for so inclement a night—and against this disappointment I must weigh the quality of the audience, including, as it did, two ex-Viceroy, and the deep impression you made on them all. Sir Owen Burne was not more enthusiastic than Sir John Strachey. I saw Mr. Waterfield afterward, and, on my expatiating on the brilliant intellectual quality of your paper, he rejoined, and with significant emphasis—"Yes, but it was more than that. It has touched me, and I am full of gratitude to Hunter for the clear way in which, without giving any handle to criticism, he indicated his personal belief in the truths of Christianity and his confidence in its future." . . . Mr. Maitland, too, was full of hearty admiration. This paper will make a lasting impression, and will enhance an official reputation already so high that it would be difficult to add to it.

Sir George rightly gauged the influence of this remarkable address. The great Missionary Societies of the Church of England vied with each other in expressions of gratitude to its author, and republished his lecture in their proceedings. Nor were the Nonconformist bodies behindhand in acknowledging the stimulus given by Hunter to the drooping cause of missions. No movement of our age requires enthusiasm in a greater degree; and the support of a distinguished layman was alike opportune and of enduring value.

The same broad sympathy led Hunter to give a discriminating support in the leading journal to the efforts made by a small but powerful section of the Indian people to gain a larger share in the government of their country. I have already alluded to that which is styled the "Congress" movement. It dates from 1885; when seventy-one delegates from all parts of India met at Bombay and passed resolutions in favour of a



Royal Commission of Inquiry into Indian administration and the grant to their countrymen of an increased degree of political power. These gatherings have since been held at the Presidency capitals in turn yearly; and the programme of the agitators has gradually widened. They belong for the most part to a numerically insignificant class which has received an English education in our colleges and schools, and have imbibed the theories of British politics from text-books. The legal profession, for which the Indian character is especially suited, contributes the larger proportion of the Congress delegates; and while the movement brought a clique of political agitators to the front, the Mahammadans, the native chiefs, and the great landed proprietors, with a few exceptions, have held aloof. I need scarcely add that the Congress excited suspicion and animosity in the Anglo-Indian public, between whom and the educated natives a gulf had been dug by Lord Ripon's Criminal Jurisdiction Bill. Hunter had given his aid to that measure; and he consistently championed the claims of the Congress. In three special articles which appeared in *The Times* between 21st and 23rd May, he traced the origin of the political aspirations of India, and stated the Congress proposals dispassionately. First and foremost came the separation between the judicial and executive functions, which are united in the District Magistrates throughout India. This is an admitted anomaly. Indeed its only justification is the necessity in times of stress that Government should have a representative in every administrative unit responsible for the maintenance of peace and the prompt execution of criminal justice. An order of things which should make the District Chief a mere raker-in of revenue and remove his guiding hand from the workings of the police might lead to disaster in the event of a widespread revolt against our authority. Injustice sometimes flows from the fact that in India the same official is held accountable for catching a thief and convicting him; and it is a moot point whether this disadvantage is, or is not, outbalanced by the weighty political considerations to which I have alluded. Hunter decided in the negative, and affirmed that a root-and-branch separation of the often discordant functions was simply a question of finance. The other reforms advocated by the Congress stood on firmer



ground. Technical education is an admitted necessity for India; and it is of vastly more importance than all the catch-words of the agitation combined. The expansion of the Legislative Councils on a representative basis was equally essential, and it has now been conceded. The presentation of the annual budgets to the supreme legislative body, and the right of interpellation by each member were other Congress desiderata; and they too have been granted. A proposal that the armies of the feudatory chiefs should be employed for imperial defence was advocated by Hunter in the "India of the Queen," and it formed a pillar of the Congress platform. The dream has become a reality; and in the well-armed and well-drilled contingents held by our feudatories at the disposal of the central power, we have a sensible increase in the homogeneity and strength of the Empire. But Hunter's well-balanced mind led him to reject the extreme demands of the Congress visionaries. He was convinced that India was far from being ripe for popular representation, or a simulacrum of parliamentary government. Civilisation, like nature, does nothing *per saltum*; national liberties are bought by ages of tears and blood, not gained by frothy declamation and inflammatory newspaper articles. The Indian Government, wrote Hunter, must be a strong Government, and any expansion of popular rights would be dearly bought if it weakened the executive.

This temperate and weighty statement of India's political aspirations had a profound effect on the public mind. Its substance was telegraphed to India and published broadcast by the Congress wire-pullers. But it gained for the author some obloquy in Anglo-Indian circles, and was regarded by the conservative party at the India Office as savouring of wild and revolutionary designs. There can be no doubt that, but for Hunter's support of the Indian Congress, he would have been selected to fill one of the three vacancies which fell this year in the India Council. No living man was better fitted than he to occupy a seat there; and he was anxious to give his unrivalled experience to the service of his country. It speaks volumes for his public spirit that he should have continued to support an unpopular side until the vagaries of



an extreme section rendered it necessary that he should sever his connection with the Congress movement.

Nor was his interest in India confined to her politics. Unlike most returned exiles he maintained a close correspondence with men of all degrees there, from the provincial governor to the humble clerk. Amongst the letters of the spring of 1888 is one which has a historic value.

FROM LORD CONNEMARA.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MADRAS,  
March 4, 1888.

I wish you had been in Calcutta during the investiture. It was a very picturesque scene, and, with the exception of the chief recipient of distinction, all performed their parts well. . . . I was thinking as I went up to be invested with the Grand Cross of the Indian Empire, that you would have made the occasion famous had you been there. But the announcement of Lord Dufferin's resignation seemed to me to cast a chilling air around. The press appeared dull dogs; the officials matter-of-fact people, utterly devoid of imagination, taste, or poetry. In fact, the only one who seemed to be moved by the ceremony was the Viceroy himself, who did his part with great dignity. . . . Could Lord Dalhousie and my poor brother Mayo have been present that day, the one would have rejoiced to see the Indian Empire which he did so much to build commemorated in heraldic ceremonial; the other would have been gratified that the cause of his brother's distinction was the memory of his own great services.

In the beginning of April Hunter enjoyed a riding tour in the New Forest with his second son, William, who had left Eton for Balliol. On the way they halted at Queenwood, near —

My old school, where the principal was most polite and trudged about the woods and the haunts of my boyhood with us for three hours. We visited the famous yew tree avenue, where the yews grow to fine trunks unique in England.<sup>1</sup>

Christ Church to Amesbury; a delightful forenoon with Willie on Hengistbury Head, bright sunshine and glorious waves. Rode straight through the forest, guiding our course by the wind on our cheeks.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lady Hunter, dated 12th April 1888.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of 13th April 1888.



Soon after his return he spent a few days in London, and gave my wife and myself a good deal of his society. He accompanied us to the Lyceum to witness Sir Henry Irving's wonderful rendering of "Faust." He did full justice to the staging, which was then unsurpassed in London, and was particularly impressed by the opening scene showing the summit of the Brocken with all manner of creeping things to enhance the horrors of the play. But the Lyceum ideal was far from satisfying his artistic sense. He thought a noble drama which portrayed the struggle between good and evil in every human heart, degraded by too elaborate setting, and he gave us a most eloquent analysis of the real "Faust," as he had seen it played in the land of its birth. On the following night he went with me to the weekly house dinner at the Savage Club, and found the Bohemianism which clung to the old quarters in the Savoy very much to his liking. Often in after years he quoted a quatrain improvised on that occasion by one of the "savages":—

"Man wants but little here in life,  
So doth the poet sing;  
At least he only wants a wife,  
And she—wants everything."

On 8th May he was entertained at dinner by the committee of the Colonial Institute and addressed its members on the great importance to India of technical education. Soon after returning to Oxford he removed from Marchfield to Cherwell Edge, a large, newly-built house in the heart of the quarter which was then especially affected by the married Dons. It overlooked the parks and the most beautiful of the network of rivers which encircle Oxford; but the flaunting hues of its red brick led irreverent undergraduates to style the house "Eyesoria."<sup>1</sup> Its new tenant set to work at once to clothe the naked walls with creepers and surround it with a shrubbery. Thus, before he left Cherwell Edge for a home of his own creation, he had done much to bring it into harmony with the mellow tones of the ancient city.

On 11th June, he presided at the inaugural meeting of

<sup>1</sup> i.e., "Isauria," the land between two rivers. The locality is called Mesopotamia at Oxford, whence the pun.



the Centennial Conference of Foreign Missions held at Exeter Hall and watched the progress of the subsequent gatherings, which scrutinised every department of missionary labour. The fruit of this experience was seen in an article entitled "Our Missionaries" in the July number of the *Contemporary Review*. It is remarkable for breadth of view and sound common-sense. The author recognised—

The services which all the greater religions have performed for mankind, the binding power which they supplied to the feeble social organisation of ancient days, the support which they gave to the nascent moral sense, the function which they have discharged in developing the ideas of national obligation and of domestic duty. It was religion that removed the most important relationships of life, alike in the family and the State, from the caprice of individual option, and gave security to human intercourse by sanctions which the individual man did not dare to challenge.

But Christianity, he averred, represented ideals at once nobler and more consonant with the needs of civilisation. Underlying the euphemisms of the other highly-developed creeds is a conviction that life is not, and cannot be, worth living:—

Christianity comes to the Indian races in an age of new activity and hopefulness as a fully-equipped religion of effort and hope. . . . For, though to a fortunate minority Christianity may be a religion of faith, yet I think that to most of us it is rather a religion of hope and charity.

These words give a key to Hunter's moral code, while his tolerance and robust common sense shone conspicuously in this peroration:—

The time has come for missionaries themselves . . . to protest against every form of exaggeration and insincerity in popular expositions of their work. They must purge their cause of bigotry and cant. Of bigotry, such as the injustice which some pious people in England do to the Roman Catholic clergy in India, to that great Church which is quietly and with small worldly means educating, disciplining, and consoling a Christian population three times more numerous than all the Protestant converts in India put together. Of cant, such as the tirades against caste and other indigenous institutions which accomplish for a densely-crowded tropical population what the Primitive Church did for its own little community, and what later Christianity fails to effect—namely, to support the poor without State aid.



The health of their first-born, Broughton, now caused poignant anxiety to his parents. He had injured his spine at the age of seventeen, while playing at ball with some German comrades, and, in spite of his young wife's devoted nursing, his condition daily grew worse. In June he was compelled to leave his studies at Oxford for Newquay, in Cornwall, in the hope that sea air would work a cure. When that resource failed Hunter sought for a more congenial clime, and thought that he had found one in the interior of Natal. It was arranged that the invalid should start for Durban with the Bishop of Zululand, who most kindly promised to take charge of him during the voyage and help him to find a home in the invigorating climate of Pietermaritzburg. On 15th August the rest of his family drove from Oxford to visit him at Newquay. The routine of life on this tour, which lasted a month, is given in the diary:—

Breakfast at 9.30; write or read till 1 P.M.; then start and drive twenty-five miles by 7 P.M. with half-an-hour's rest on the road.

On 7th September poor Broughton and his wife sailed from Plymouth for South Africa. Everything that loving care could effect was done by his parents to ensure his comfort. But when they bade him farewell on board the *Athenian* they had a presentiment that they would see his face no more. He died on 18th October 1888 at Durban; and with him perished ambitions which were very near the father's heart.

The journey was the occasion for some literary work of great value. In September there appeared in the *Contemporary Review* a "Study of the Recent Problems in India," in which the reforms advocated by the Congress were temperately stated. Yet more remarkable was a signed review in the *Academy* of that month on the third edition of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "Departmental Ditties." The critic's own experiences are mirrored in the concluding lines:—

Besides the silly little world that disports itself throughout most of these ditties, there is another Anglo-Indian world which, for high aim and a certain steadfastness in effort after the personal interest in effort is well-nigh dead, has never had an equal in history. Some day a writer will arise—perhaps this young poet is



the destined man—who will make that noble Anglo-Indian world known as it really is. It will then be seen by what a hard discipline of endurance our countrymen and countrywomen in India are trained to do England's greatest work on the earth. Heat, solitude, anxiety, ill-health, the never-ending pain of separation from wife and child—these are not the experiences which make men amusing in after-life. But these are the stern teachers who have schooled one generation of Anglo-Indian administrators after another to go on resolutely, if not hopefully, with their appointed task. Of this realistic side of Anglo-Indian life Mr. Kipling also gives us glimpses. His serious poems seem to me the ones most full of promise. Taken as a whole, his work gives hope of a new literary star of no mean magnitude arising in the East.

Shortly after his return from the west of England he signed an agreement with Messrs. Chapman & Hall to write a biography of Sir Bartle Frere. That great man's widow had begged him to undertake the task, and Sir George Birdwood insisted in repeated letters that Hunter alone could do it the fullest justice.

FROM SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

*August 29, 1888.*

Frere is a most interesting and most fascinating subject. A man of birth and of the highest culture, a shining light as a Churchman, and yet a complete man of the world. A simple-hearted, pure-souled English gentleman to the last, he delighted in all manly sports and innocent social amusements, and was yet a statesman of varied experience and piercing foresight. He had, besides, the quality of personal magnetism which attracted men of all types to him. Yet, in times of fierce party antagonisms, he was treated with the grossest and cruellest injustice by both factions in the State, and died without winning the crown of worldly success which he so splendidly deserved. And there is the pathos of it.

Hunter agreed in thinking Sir Bartle Frere a congenial theme, and undertook to commemorate his great career by a memoir which was to extend over two volumes and be ready for the printer in October 1889. The rest of the year was occupied in frequent visits to Lady Frere at Wressil Lodge, Wimbledon, which had been the resort of all that was best and most earnest in London society; and none of his multifarious works ever gave him more labour and anxiety.

A brief interruption came in the first week of November, when



he journeyed to Edinburgh to deliver the anniversary address of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. The subject was "The Historical Aspects of Indian Geography," and it was treated with a vigour which held the audience spell-bound. It was said of Dean Swift that he could write entertainingly on a broomstick. Hunter had the same precious gift of investing the driest subject with the charm of novelty and keen human interest. The Earl of Rosebery, who presided, voiced the general impression when he said—

I do not deserve your thanks for what I have done here this evening. I have not been the chairman. I have only been the first pupil here to-night. We have all been pupils, and, I think, delighted pupils.

Regarding the lecture he wrote hurriedly from Edinburgh:—

TO LADY HUNTER.

November 7, 1888.

Everything went very well last night. The room was beautifully decorated with palms, and Liberty was let loose as regards the hangings. It is the best great hall for hearing that I have ever spoken in, and 2000 people were stowed away with ease. And now I beg you to excuse me for writing so briefly. This is the nineteenth letter I have written to-day, and I sent off twenty-three yesterday. I have still a quarter of my Dundee lecture to get through and the whole of my magazine article to recast before the 20th. Have pity on a poor penman!

While passing through London on his return from Scotland he formed one of a brilliant party which assembled at the board of Mr. James Knowles, editor of the *Nineteenth Century*. It was the occasion of a display of the newly-invented phonograph, by Mr. Edison's agent, Colonel Gouraud. The sensations evoked by the weird machine found expression in a letter to a friend, of which Lady Hunter has preserved the following fragment:—

But instead of apologising further, I will try to amuse you by an account of a rather remarkable dinner at which I assisted the other evening in London. Mr. Edison, the American inventor of the phonograph, which bottles up one's speech, and then reproduces it after any lapse of time precisely in one's own tones, had telegraphed for a record of the voices of the Englishmen who



might be regarded as representative men in their different walks in life. Round the dinner-table was a marvellous diversity of politicians, the lion sitting down with the lamb, and feeding gently off the same dish of Brussels sprouts—Gladstone and Lord Rowton (dear old Dizzy's private secretary), the Earl of Aberdeen and Lord Playfair, Sir John Fowler (the builder of the Forth Bridge, and the greatest English engineer of our age), with three or four others.

Gladstone looked much aged, but woke up into brilliant talk, and happened to quote several epigrams. Thereon some one lamented the decay of the epigram in our days. Lord Rowton sensibly remarked that epigrams were going out of fashion because we were becoming so careful of each other's feelings in private society. In support of this he cited a little-known epigram of Fox, to whom the famous Mrs. Montague had said in a fit of temper one evening that she did not care for him or his opinions "three skips of a louse," if you will pardon me for repeating the plain speech of a lady of fashion in the last century. Fox bowed deeply, took his departure, and sent her the following lines next morning:—

"Mrs. Montague told me, and in her own house,  
She did not care for me three skips of a louse;  
But it doesn't hurt me, whatever she said,  
For a lady speaks always what runs in her head."

After we had all laughed Lord Playfair broke in, "But does a louse skip?" So that we came to the conclusion that epigrams must necessarily become a lost art in an age which demands that satire shall not only be polite but also scientific.

There were no ladies present, yet I thought that, however one may differ from Gladstone, it is impossible not to feel the spell of his great personal modesty, and of his beautiful courtesy, almost amounting to deference, to younger or less famous men. At dinner he was regretting that he had so little voice left to place at the service of Mr. Edison. "When I speak now," he said, "I only seem to hear a buzzing through cotton wool." The representative of science present explained that he really had more voice than he (Gladstone) knew of. That, in point of fact, no man ever hears his own voice or the waves of sound as they reach his audience, but chiefly certain vibrations coming up from the throat through passages and membranes to the ear, and which are as distinct if we close our ears with our fingers. Well, we had a brilliant dinner, and rose from the table at near eleven o'clock.

Then each of us made a little speech, or rather spoke a letter, to Mr. Edison in America, Gladstone, of course, first. He warmed up into a noble and pathetic tribute from an old man who rejoiced that he had lived to see an invention which he believed was



destined to bring closer together not only America and England, but all peoples and the great spirits of distant future generations, and so forth for ten minutes of fine, solemn oratory. Lord Rowton came a good deal later and could hardly be got to say anything. But when he did speak what he said was in admirably good taste, lamenting that his dear old master was not there to stand side by side with Mr. Gladstone and to welcome this invention, the herald of a marvellous new age.

When all had done their duty the speeches were read off again by the phonograph. Gladstone stood in rapt attention, drawn up to his full noble stature, listening for the first time to his own voice as others hear it. He looked like an ancient eagle, with his beak and those wonderful flashing eyes which have now a far-off look. When it was finished he laid down the hearing tubes gently on the table, said softly, "I had no idea there was so much of me left," and went away almost without another word. When he had gone we were silent for a little. Then by one consent we all became noisy, and cheered into the instrument for Gladstone and Edison and England and America. It was close on two in the morning when we broke up.

I go to town next week to address a large meeting on Monday at the London Institution; my subject is "The New Forces in India." Lady Hunter and I stay with James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and hope to meet there many celebrities, for the gathering together of whom he is famous. On Wednesday John Morley has asked me into the camp of the enemy to dine with him and meet Mr. Bradlaugh, to whom I am requested to talk some sense about India, as otherwise Mr. Bradlaugh will talk much nonsense on that thorny subject in Parliament next session. I do not know whether I can do any good, but I feel bound to try. Then we go on for a few days to Lady Frere's near Wimbledon, and so home in time to hold Christmas in our own house. Willy has returned, or "come down" from Balliol, that is to say he has brought over his hair brushes and sponge in a cab. It is nice to have him back. Campbell thrives; his holidays begin next week. He and I are going to ride a good deal in the holidays, as he is now eleven. If the weather is good Willy and I will ride over to Malvern, about seventy or eighty miles, I think, and back in the first week of January. I have had some capital days with the old Berkshire hounds, and would hunt regularly if I could spare the time. We have still our German horses, and I bought a fine hunter with a long pedigree in Somersetshire when we were on our driving tour to Cornwall in September.

The enthusiasm of Hunter's political writings at this time was regarded with misgiving by one or two devoted friends, to whose knowledge of the world he owed much of his



success in his new sphere of activity. The following extracts are as true to-day as when they flowed from the writer's pen:—

FROM SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

*October 21, 1888.*

Public men must know no resentments, and pressmen must never fail one another, and must never fall out with each other. That is the stupidest error they can commit. The nexus of society and of personal relations in this English life of ours is very intimate. It is not safe to trample on the toes of the obscurest of men, for all seem to have their friends in this vast intermingled world of London . . . — was very perfect in the exercise of this sort of tact. He made every man about him a somebody of some sort, and not only did he interest each in himself, but the very fact of his magnifying them magnified his own reputation as their leader and head. You will remember that it is in this way that Homer exalts Achilles. He says comparatively little about Achilles himself, but every one of Achilles' companions is a hero, and looks up to Achilles as superior to all, and that makes heroical pre-eminence.

FROM SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

*December 13, 1888.*

You have statesmanlike views regarding India, and I fully sympathise with you as far as you go. But look beyond India; survey the Empire and mark the portents of terror closing around us. Until they are safely laid, gather yourself together, and in all you think, say, or do, be guided solely by the present and pressing motive of helping a great people standing stolidly in imminent jeopardy. It will depend upon the manner in which we comport ourselves during the next few years whether we are to remain an imperial people in the world, or sink to the condition of Holland and Belgium. We are in peril from France, from Russia, from Germany, from America—I mention these powers in the order of their menace to ourselves—and yet we are taking no thought of our own defence. . . . I view with barely less alarm your pre-occupation in the vain dreams of these unpractical and wholly speculative Indian politicians, when your brilliant and commanding ability might be so efficaciously given to the practical problems affecting the internal security of our Indian Empire. Of course the sincere sympathy with the people of India, which all your writings attest, increases our international safety by strengthening the internal security of India. But at this moment there are questions more directly affecting our external Indian relations which are entirely ignored by the Liberal party, and with which



you are eminently better fitted to deal . . . I don't want you to be always cockering up demagogic doctrinaires here or in India. Besides, they are not so grateful, these politicians, that you should give yourself away to them with such fine *largesse* of heart and soul.

These remarks will find an echo in the heart of many an Anglo-Indian who has devoted his best years in urging that the people of India should participate gradually in the government of their own country—amongst them Sir Richard Garth, formerly Chief Justice of Bengal, to whom Hunter foretold the causes which led him regretfully to dissociate himself from these leaders of the Indian Congress.

TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR RICHARD GARTH.

December 24, 1888.

Frankly, I do not consider India ripe for anything like a numerical representative system such as we are accustomed to in England and America. On the other hand, I do not object to tentative experiments in representation; for example, members in the Legislative Council from the Universities, the great municipalities, and other similar constituencies . . . and such a measure of political advance as would strengthen the Council by conceding the right of interpellation and securing for it the full discussion of the Budget. . . . I have stated this plainly to Mr. U. C. Bonnerjee, Mr. William Digby, and other representatives of the Congress here. If more is asked for, many of our friends in India will range themselves against the movement. We shall simply strengthen the hands of our Anglo-Indian opponents, and we shall not obtain a hearing from responsible statesmen at home.

In these anticipations Hunter proved a true prophet, for the Congress has been wrecked by the manœuvres of doctrinaires, who aim at being men of action and are not men of the world.

Pleasanter thoughts filled his mind when he penned the following letter to the friend of his youth, who was now in his eighty-ninth year, with little left of his commanding personality save the courtly manner which was perhaps its greatest attraction:—

TO MR. BRIAN HODGSON.

December 16, 1888.

I should not like Christmas to pass without bringing my best wishes to you and Mrs. Hodgson. Your portrait hangs always



opposite to me while I am at work, and I often think of the noble labours which you have accomplished, and of your great kindness to me when I was an unknown young civilian at home on sick leave. I wish you had heard the cheers which greeted your name when I referred to you at the anniversary meeting of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society the other day. Your name is cherished by many in the North, as indeed by many in India. I am very busy with my life of Sir Bartle Frere. It will take eighteen months from my "History of India," but it gives me an insight into the inner working of Indian administration which I could not otherwise gain.



## CHAPTER XIX

### AN IRREPARABLE LOSS

THE friendships which Hunter formed with the leaders of thought and action at the University were followed by a closer connection with that august body. He was made Master of Arts by a decree of the Hebdomadal Council, and was appointed Examiner in the Honours School of Oriental Studies. His relations with Balliol were cemented by the entrance of his eldest son as an undergraduate at the College which had gained a foremost rank under the rule of the late Dr. Jowett: Thenceforward Hunter took an active share in the government of the ancient seat of learning, and regarded it with the affection due to an *Alma Mater*. In consonance with his resolve to interpret our work in India to the cultivated classes at home, he gave a lecture to the selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service at Balliol on Lord Dalhousie, a Viceroy who belonged to the masterful type illustrated by Lords Hastings and Wellesley. The lights gained by his preparation for this duty led him to fall in with a proposal made in March 1889 by the delegates of the Clarendon Press to edit a series of compact volumes giving the salient features in Indian history grouped round the careers of its successive rulers. The acceptance of these functions involved a vast amount of labour and of even greater tact and patience. There are few things harder of achievement than a small work on a mighty subject; and the financial limitations imposed by the cheapness of the issue enhanced the difficulty. In a circular-letter, addressed on 24th June 1889 to those whom he thought likely to assist him, he wrote:—

The leading idea is to furnish a series of retrospective rather than personal biographies. Thus the rise of imperial power in India will be presented under the title of Akbar, its decline under the name of Aurangzib. A volume on Dupleix will sum up the



phases of the struggle for supremacy between France and England, while that on Lord Dalhousie will exhibit the first development of the East India Company's rule.

As a model for his fellow-workers he resolved to open the procession with a sketch of Lord Dalhousie, and, according to his wont, he went to the fountain-head for materials. The great Proconsul's daughter, Lady Connemara, gave him much valuable information, while she regretted that a stringent provision in her father's will precluded any use of the diaries in which he recorded the leading events of his Indian life.

FROM LADY CONNEMARA.

*July 26, 1889.*

To me there is something inexpressibly grand in the silence with which he has chosen to enwrap himself, but I think that I am consulting his dignity best by not striving to obtain partial justice for one who has, as it were, declined to have justice done to him.

His hero's son-in-law, Sir James Fergusson, was more communicative, and Hunter soon had a mass of information which enabled him to give a striking picture of a great personality. Aurangzib, too, he at first retained in his own hands; but, later on, on learning that Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole was engaged on a monograph of the imperial bigot, he generously made over to him the data collected for the work. The rest of the "Rulers of India" were worthy of the first flight, and the editor contrived to surround himself with a band of writers, all of whom had won distinction in their several spheres. They looked to him for inspiration and guidance, and caught a measure of the enthusiasm which he brought to bear on every duty of life. The series has sold by tens of thousands, and the liberality with which the delegates permitted translations to be made of the books has increased the effect produced by their foresight and public spirit.

At the end of March, while suffering from a fractured ankle caused by a kick from one of his horses, he had a letter from the late Duke of Argyll on a subject in which both were specialists—the effect of the growth of population in the subdivision of peasant holdings.



From the DUKE OF ARGYLL.

March 29, 1889.

DEAR SIR WILLIAM HUNTER,—Will you allow me to address you as already having pleasure of your acquaintance, since I have so long known you in your writings? There is one subject connected with India in which I take a great interest, and to which you allude in a paper recently published in the Scotch Geographical Society. I refer to the causes which tend to break up the old village communities. I have never seen any detailed account of the rules, or customs, by which *subdivision* due to excess of breeding has been immemorially prevented in India. It is this which, in Ireland and the Hebrides, has reduced the village communities of the Celtic population to ruin. "Crofters" are simply the survival of the village or "township" system common all over Europe. But in the island of Lewis, for example, they have been breeding and subdividing for the last half-century to an extent which, coupled with great ignorance and great idleness, has resulted in general pauperism.

In India there must be some customary rules which have prevented this result. What are they? I have never seen this point elucidated. The jealous privacy of all Oriental races on domestic matters may have interfered with investigation. But it must be known, more or less, whether, in village communities, all surviving children are at once admitted as partners, and whether shares are allotted to them as a matter of course.

In the Balkan Peninsula, I think, customary rules prevent early marriages or without consent of the commune. Of course in parts of India where there are large areas of unoccupied land the difficulty may be avoided by the founding of new villages. But I have not heard of this as a matter of fact. If you could give me any information on this subject out of your abundant stores of knowledge in regard to India, I should be much obliged to you. It is one of great interest, and, so far as I know, has been by no means worked out. I hope you will excuse me giving you the trouble of this question.

The response was dictated from a sick bed :—

To the DUKE OF ARGYLL.

April 12, 1889.

I have much pleasure in replying, so far as my knowledge permits, to your letter of 29th March. The question which your Grace raises is of great importance, and it occupied my attention during several years in connection with my scheme for agricultural migrations in India. As I was disabled by a broken ankle from replying for some weeks to your letter, I have also taken advantage



of the delay to make inquiries from the two administrators who are most competent to offer an opinion on the point in British India, and in the Native States—Sir Charles Bernard and Sir Lepel Griffin.

The actual division of holdings in India is, to some extent, prevented by the joint family system, and by the coparcenary custom of working the village lands in many parts of India. But these influences only produce their full effect as long as subdivision is not rendered compulsory by the increase of the population—that is to say, until custom is overpowered by the economic facts. The real question is, How far is subdivision of holdings compelled by an increase of population; and what influences, customary or economic, prevent such an increase, and intervene between such an increase and subdivision of personal holdings? The true answer, disclosed by local inquiry, is that the difficulties arising from over-population result from economic causes which had not developed in India under native rule, and which are only in our own generation making themselves felt in all their power. In ancient times, and until three-quarters of a century of British rule had passed, over-population was unknown in India. The demand was by the landholders for tenants, not by the husbandman for land. I have pointed this out in my "*Annals of Rural Bengal*," and more lately in my "*Indian Empire*," pp. 46–50, ed. 1886. Sir Charles Bernard now writes to me:—"My idea is that there is nothing like over-population in any part of India before 1840. Up to that time, even in Behar, the competition was for ryots and not for land." I need not go into the statistics of the enormous increase of population under British rule, or of the extension of cultivation. To take the Gangetic basin alone. At the end of the last century about one-third of Lower Bengal, and probably half the Panjab, lay unoccupied. The Central Provinces lay half unoccupied on the south, Assam lay unoccupied on the north. How came it that this great breeding-ground, with every cause of the increase of an Indian population in full development, was thus surrounded by almost unoccupied provinces, while within its own districts the competition was by landlords for cultivators, not by cultivators for land?

In Lower Bengal a single famine (1770) is believed to have swept away one-third of the population; in the Panjab six destroying invasions from Afghanistan within twenty-three years had simply stripped wide tracts of their people; in the Central Provinces the forest tribal system and the Maratha oppressor had rendered anything like an adequate population impossible; in Assam the scanty population which had previously existed had been broken up by invasions from north, west, and south; in Eastern Bengal large tracts of fertile land are entered on our early maps as bare of villages, with the words over them, "depopulated by the Mughls." With these cauteries in full work, the question of "artificial restraints" could scarcely arise. I need not trouble



you with the economic causes which have revolutionised the relations of the population to the land in British India, and have freed a tropical population from the tropical checks on its increase, without yet teaching it to submit to prudential restraints. At this day, with all barriers thrown down between Native and British India, the pressure of the people on the land is 229 per square mile in the British Provinces, and 96 in the Native States. But, beside the effectual cauteries on the population in India of the last century, there are also outlets for the peasantry unknown in our day. The armies absorbed multitudes, and the official class was an army in itself. This class still finds employment for what seems to us an incredible number of persons in the Native States. Sir Charles Bernard declares that at Mandalay he found forty thousand followers and hangers-on about the Court, besides ten thousand monks in that city alone. "Before we had been there a year," he adds, "four-fifths of these people had cleared out." Or again, in the Nizam's dominions, 250,000 men of all sorts are supported (exclusive of the strictly village officials) to discharge services which the British Governor in the Central Provinces accomplishes for an equal population by means of 25,000 to 30,000 employes of all kinds. Sir Lepel Griffin also speaks of service, meaning public employment, as one of the chief outlets for surplus population in Native States. There were, therefore, sharp checks on the increase of population in Native India, and also a great outlet for any surplus population, which are equally not known in our days. There were also innumerable local industries, iron-working, weaving, textile, or metallurgical manufactures of many kinds, which British rule has impaired or altogether destroyed.

The answer, therefore, to your Grace's inquiry is that no rules were required to deal with an evil which did not exist. I have looked in vain in our Indian collections of Customary Law, such as Tupper's volumes for the Panjab and Steel's work for Bombay. I have also had unusual opportunities of personal inquiry in every Province, and the foregoing sentence summarises the result. The truth is that in British India we are suffering from the sudden development of the economic causes of the increase of population in advance of a commensurate development of the economic facilities for the redistribution of the population. For years we have been trying to deal with the difficulty of an increasing population and its heavier pressure on the land by means of legislation. During my six years in the Viceroy's Legislative Council I had much to do with such measures. The evidence that came before me made me feel that legislation in such a matter might be a palliative, but could not supply a remedy. For the more we restricted the landlord's claim to rent, the greater the impulse which we give to a congested increase of the rural population. I therefore instituted inquiries in every one of the 250



districts of India as to the facts of agricultural migration in the past, and as to the possibilities of agricultural migrations in the future. Those inquiries, I observe, have formed the basis of recent action by the Government, but I am not yet informed of the precise details. Of one thing I feel sure, that the remedy for a congested peasant population does not reside in land laws, but in railways, facilities for migration and emigration, new industries and employments of the people apart from their single resource—the soil. All these will rapidly come in India, indeed they are now come. The introduction of steam into the cotton factories and jute mills of Calcutta and Bombay means a new era of industry for India. We are only waiting for a cheap process of smelting iron with Indian coal containing eighteen per cent. of ash, instead of the English process adapted to English coal with under five per cent., to inaugurate a new metal age.

Prudential restraints will also assert themselves as education penetrates the masses. The present difficulty in India is the direct result of removing the old checks on the population without supplying on an adequate scale the modern facilities for its distribution and maintenance. There is as much cultivable but still uncultivated land in the provinces lying immediately around Bengal as the whole crop area of Great Britain. It has been a true pleasure to me to have this opportunity of laying before your Grace views to which I have for many years been endeavouring to secure practical effect. I trust that they may be found to contain the explanations of which your Grace was in quest.

From the DUKE OF ARGYLL.

*April 16, 1889.*

I cannot lose a post in thanking you very warmly for your most interesting letter, which I have just received and read. It gives an ample explanation of the economic facts which are so formidable in India, and it indicates an opinion on the fashionable Irish agrarian legislation in which I entirely concur. I have been astonished by the facile adoption in India of measures which were here purely the result of parliamentary tactics, and not of any philosophical regard to the causes which are in permanent operation. Your account of the still unoccupied spaces in India—especially in Bengal—rather surprises me. But I am very glad to hear of it. It shows that the ultimate *pinch* may be postponed for many a day. From Lavelaye's book on the Balkan Peninsula, and other books on Russia, I think that restraints on subdivision of the communal lands of village communities have been long established among the Slavonic peoples. And it must be so wherever the destructive ravages of war and famine have been long stopped. The artificial lowering of rents among a population content with a low standard of subsistence is simply a direct



stimulus to pauperism. Yet the Indian Council of late seems to have gone in for it without any misgiving. It may, however, do comparatively little harm when there is such an "outrun" as you describe into unoccupied lands. But I presume the first reclamation of jungle land is rather a heavy operation, though not needing the capital required in Europe. It is done, I think, chiefly by burning.

A few weeks later he was again consulted on a subject of great difficulty. His correspondent, the Convener of the Committee of Foreign Missions of the Scottish Church, asked his opinion as to a proposal to reduce its expenditure on education in India. Hunter knew the mechanism of public instruction better than any man living, and he regarded with unfeigned dismay the closure of the excellent colleges maintained by the kirk. Such a step, he thought, would deprive our educational work in the East of the best of the institutions which temper the exclusively secular teaching of the Government schools. It would react injuriously, too, on the interests of Christianity. The early Catholic missionaries had made a disastrous mistake when, in their zeal to obtain adherents, they converted without educating. The descendants of those who pressed in such numbers into their fold during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought discredit on the creed to which they nominally belonged.

The Roman Catholic authorities have themselves perceived this fact; and in our own day they are second to none in their efforts to educate the people. I would speak of the existing Catholic missionaries in India with the highest respect. They are labouring with a noble zeal and self-denial to remedy evils bequeathed to them by the old conception of proselytising. In so doing they refrain, even more than our own missionaries, from using education as a direct means towards conversion, and are content to teach without hope of adding thereby to the immediate number of their adherents. The fact, however, remains that the low social and moral status of the "Portuguese Christians" is the historical result of ancient methods, which failed to recognise that the schoolmaster and the preacher must go hand in hand.<sup>1</sup>

The autumn holiday was spent in a fashion which always afforded Hunter the keenest delight. The family started on

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Convener of the Committee of Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland, dated 1st May 1889.



30th July on a tour to South Wales; the parents in a dogcart, the eldest boy on horseback, and the younger on a bicycle. The diary records its incidents, and the impression left on his receptive mind.

*2nd August.*—We arrived at Tetbury, a quaint town full of deserted residences. It was once a fashionable winter resort, and had its "season" for the gentry of Gloucestershire. I noticed the following epitaph in the church:—"Underneath this place lie several [residents] of this parish. Further particulars the Day of Judgment will disclose."

*3rd August.*—Staying at Alderley Grange with the Hodgsons. There is little left of the friend of my youth but his high-bred courtesy.

*6th August.*—We attended a garden party and watched a cricket match. It was amusing to see the eldest sons being pursued by all the pretty girls.

*28th August.*—At Brecon for the Eisteddfodd. A pavilion holding 8000 had been erected in an amphitheatre of hills. Madame Patti was there and sang again and again amid immense enthusiasm. In the evening I gave a champagne supper to the adjudicators at the Castle Hotel.

*31st August.*—There is a little to smile at in the Eisteddfodd, but much to admire. More than 10,000 workmen and miners came in by train daily, but I did not see a single drunken man or immodest woman in the crowd.

In the meantime the biography of Sir Bartle Frere was assuming a definite form. Two hundred pages had been printed off, and the rest of the first volume was in manuscript. How successful was Hunter's handling of a great career is shown by a letter from one who had known his subject for fifty years.

FROM SIR HENRY ACLAND.

*April 6, 1889.*

I return gratefully the proofs of your first five chapters. You have given me a kind of pleasure that I can hardly express in words by letting me see these sheets. One must be much over seventy and looking down the sunset slope to understand its full measure. . . . Your work amazed me, familiar as I am with your writings; and I cannot help adding that no work you have ever written will have similar appreciation, judging from its threshold.

Under an agreement with the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, the whole was to be ready for the printer in November.



But for the first time in the author's experience he found it impossible to complete his tale of work ; and that owing to no fault of his own. The causes of the deadlock are told in a letter to his publishers.

TO MESSRS. CHAPMAN & HALL.

September 18, 1889.

I must once more ask for a decision in regard to the second volume of Sir Bartle Frere's life. The problem is briefly this :— While engaged on the first volume, I became aware that notwithstanding my admiration of Sir Bartle Frere's character and noble service to the State, I should be unable to satisfy Lady Frere's devoted and affectionate estimate of his later public life. . . . This state of things amounted—unintentionally, I feel sure, on Lady Frere's part—to a form of compulsion placed on me, either to modify what I regard as the faithful historical view of Sir Bartle Frere's political life, or to present that view under the risk of a subsequent literary controversy of a most undesirable sort. Lady Frere referred me to you for the settlement of the difficulty. I accordingly submitted to you two proposals. The first was that I should finish the first volume, dealing with Sir Bartle Frere's administrative life, and comprising about fifty years ; while Lady Frere, either by herself or by some other person, should do the second volume, covering twenty years or so of his more strictly political work. That our names should appear jointly on the title-page, and that I should, if required, give any aid in my power to the literary construction of the second volume, short of being responsible for its conclusions. As you approved of this proposal I need merely mention that the alternative one was, in the event of Lady Frere insisting on my doing the second volume, that she and her family should abstain from any separate publication for a certain period. Months have now elapsed since these proposals were placed before you, and I must once more ask you to obtain a final decision from Lady Frere.

After much correspondence a meeting was arranged, in view of bringing about a *modus vivendi* between Sir George Birdwood, who was Lady Frere's literary adviser, her brother, Mr. J. R. Arthur, Mr. F. Chapman, and the biographer. It took place on 6th November, and resulted in an agreement that no member of the Frere family should undertake a continuation of the authorised "Life," or publish Sir Bartle Frere's despatches for three years after its publication. With regard to the grave difference of opinion which had developed as to certain phases



of his later political career, it was settled that Lady Frere's criticisms should be confined to documents to which Hunter had not had access. Unhappily the family refused to ratify these reasonable terms, and Hunter had no alternative but to abandon his task and hand over the completed portion to his publishers. Thus ended an episode which called for his patience and forbearance in a most marked degree, and was as painful to himself as to those who revered Sir Bartle Frere's memory. They will always regret that circumstances, entirely beyond the author's control, precluded him from giving an adequate presentment of the tragedy which darkened the last years of a brilliant and useful life. There is nothing more difficult, said the Duc de St. Simon, than to preserve a wise and disdainful silence in unmerited disgrace, and Sir Bartle's great qualities never shone more conspicuously than under circumstances which would have crushed or maddened a man of ordinary mould. Hunter's sympathy with all that is noble in human nature would have been deeply stirred by the imposing picture.

While this painful controversy was in progress, he found relief in travelling through the southern counties in search of a home for his remaining years. His requirements were given in a characteristic letter to his legal adviser. The area of the estate sought was between twenty and fifty acres, with a southerly aspect, abundance of old timber, a gravel soil, and some water. Its height was to be not less than 150 feet above sea level, and the distance from London an hour and a half at the most by express.<sup>1</sup> He wrote to his elder son from the Isle of Wight during one of these expeditions:—

TO WILLIAM HUNTER.

*September 17, 1889.*

I am in communication with half-a-dozen agents, and have examined at least as many houses. But I find that the article which we want is seldom in the market, and is snapped up at once. I can buy villas by the score, and not a few charming country residences. But the English build many small rooms instead of a few large ones, and if we are to get a dining-room, library, and drawing-room of the dimensions which we require, we must buy an estate of £10,000 and upwards. However, I go on from day

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mr. Beckwith, of Chislehurst, dated 21st August 1889.



to day gaining my experience, and with my mind gradually coming to the point of rest at Wytham.<sup>1</sup> This island is a gem in its way, but not in our way. It is a delightful place to visit, but hardly, I think, to reside in for most of the year.

His interest in India continued without abatement, and it led him to conclude an arrangement with Mr. B. M. Malabari, the loyal and public-spirited editor of the *Indian Spectator*, of Bombay, by which he undertook to sketch the career of Lord Reay as Governor of the Western Presidency.<sup>2</sup> His eagerness to seize every phase of national life there was shown in a request to Sir Courtenay P. Ilbert for information on the places of the Brahmo Samaj. It elicited a reply, which is instructive as revealing an example of the workings of the law governing the development of religions.

From SIR C. P. ILBERT.

October 7, 1889.

So far as I remember what happened in the Keshub Chunder Sen controversy was this:—Mr. Mozumdar, the teacher's successor, on the one hand, and Keshub's brethren, representing the disciples or "Apostles," on the other, agreed to refer the dispute to my arbitration. Messrs. Mozumdar and Sen met at my house to discuss the terms of the reference and settle the issues. In fact, a sort of informal first hearing took place. The former began by saying that the proposed appropriation of Keshub's "chair" as a holy place was in opposition to his known and recognised teachings. Mr. Sen, the brother, admitted all this, but relied on a plea of a somewhat novel kind. He said that since the teacher's death he and the younger brothers had received a revelation to the effect that the chair was to be set apart and kept sacred. He was vague as to the precise time, mode, and language of the communication, but as to the fact he was most positive. Indeed, it was admitted on both sides that this was the "case" for the Apostles. Under these circumstances, I was compelled to say that, though I felt myself competent to decide a question turning on the constitution of the Church, so far as human evidence on such a matter was obtainable, I could not undertake to deal with testimony of a kind inadmissible in a Court of Justice. I might have added, in the language of Herodotus, that the surviving Mr. Sen, having appealed

<sup>1</sup> Oaken Holt, the home eventually settled in by Sir William Hunter, stands on the fringe of the glorious Wytham woods, a relic of primeval England.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mr. B. M. Malabari of 9th September 1889. The work appeared in 1892.



to the Unseen, had no proof to offer. Thus the arbitration fell through, and how the dispute ended I know not. I believe, however, that some kind of compromise was eventually arrived at.

Another work bearing on Indian life received its finishing touches at this time. The "Old Missionary" had been on the anvil since the far-off Suri days, and had been taken up fitfully during the rare intervals allowed by the writer's absorbing devotion to sterner studies. It brings out the nobler side of Anglo-Indian life with the clearness of a photograph and a degree of pathos unsurpassed in English literature. The appearance of this immortal work in the November and December issues of the *Contemporary Review* came as a surprise to many who fancied that they had plumbed the depths of Hunter's mind. It revealed a range of qualities which those who have done me the honour to read this work will have already grasped, but which had never hitherto been associated with the power to produce vast arsenals of fact and statistics.

Among the innumerable letters from those who appreciated this masterpiece, I single out two representing opposite poles of thought:—

From MR. R. VARY CAMPBELL.

December 2, 1889.

I think, if you will let me say so, that it is one of the finest things you have ever written, for there is your usual graceful style with a pathos and a dignified reticence of emotion which I find most touching. It was not—shall I confess?—with dry eyes that I finished the story. Now, sir, if you can produce these results on a hardened lawyer who offers himself merely as a *vile corpus*, what will you do with more pliable natures? I say that you have found a new vein which you ought diligently to develop.

From MR. MEREDITH TOWNSEND.

November 24, 1889.

In your position I should think twice before I did much fiction. Yours is sure to be good, but, unless it makes an unusually deep impression, it will diminish your authority as an historian. The public never puts perfect trust in a man in two capacities. Your "History of India" ought to be a great work, for you will give it a quality wanting in every history yet published. The annals of India must always cluster round individuals, but you also know as no one else does its geography. You can describe its rulers and



their character; you can make your readers understand on what bases of solid force the Mughal power rested, and that strange compromise between a standing army and a militia which they used as an instrument of war. You can outline that forgotten subject, the Mussulman system of finance, and you can bring home to Englishmen what they have never grasped, the abounding pleasure and interest which life must have had for the active classes of India who, throughout her history, have differed more profoundly from her people than a Parisian differs from a peasant of Auvergne.

No one will question the knowledge of English thought possessed by the editor of the *Spectator*. It is related that the first Lord Ellenborough, on hearing that the banker-poet Rogers had published his "Italy," exclaimed, "If I find old Coutts writing so much as a single line of poetry I'll close my account with him!" But there are very many who regret that Hunter's flights into the realm of fiction were so rare. He yielded to the entreaties of his admirers by issuing the masterpiece in a permanent form.<sup>1</sup> It is full of a strange, haunting sweetness, and will delight thousands when the colossal achievements of its author's industry have undergone the fate of all things human.

Oxford has many merits as a place of residence, but it can hardly be considered a pleasant winter resort. The ancient city lies low, and the surrounding rivers make its suburbs a vast lake when their waters are swelled by a heavy rainfall. Early in January 1890 the Hunters escaped these depressing influences for a few days by a trip to Mudiford, near Christchurch, Hampshire. On 4th January the diary runs:—

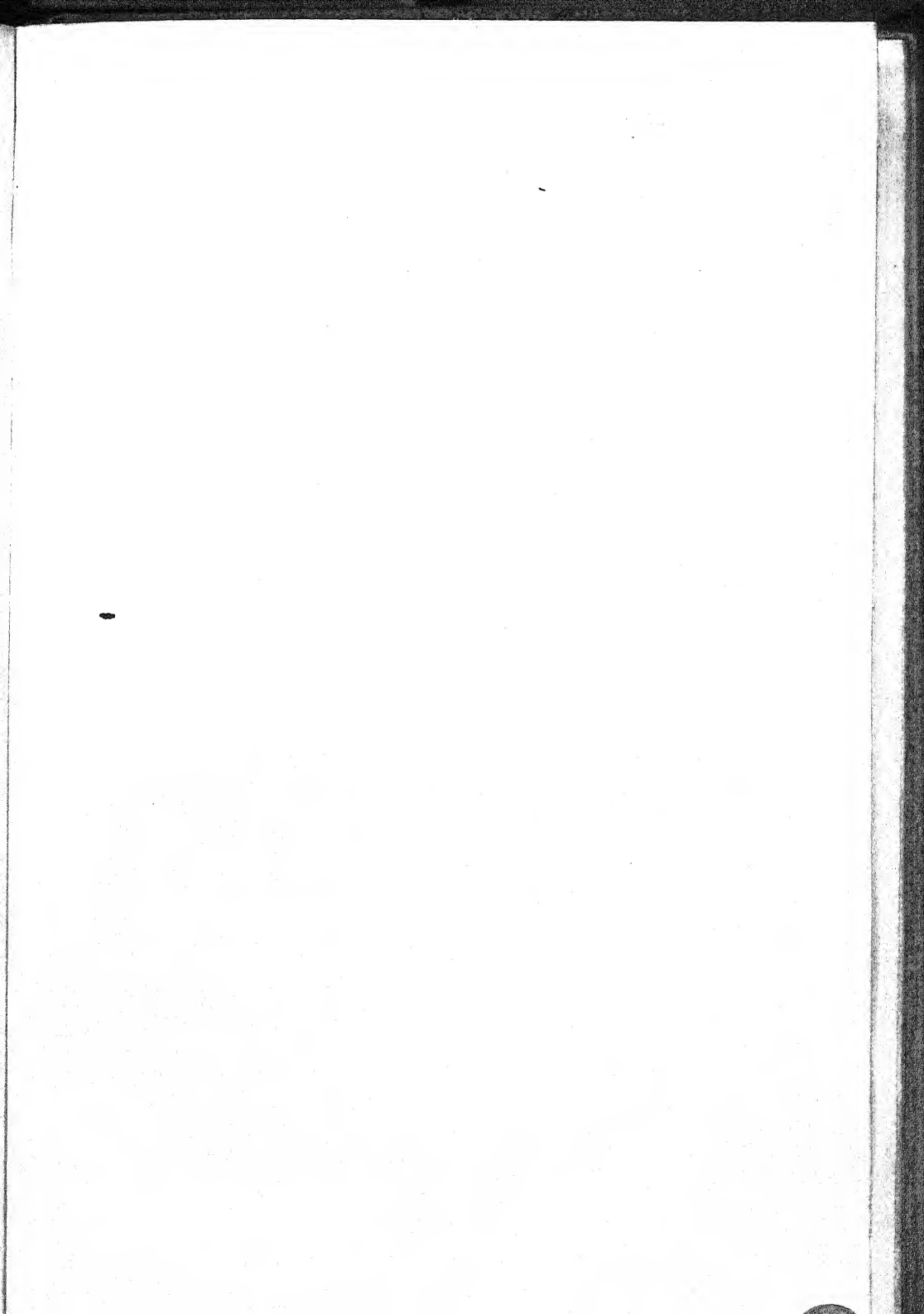
We crossed over to Hengistbury Head, and had a delightful day together among the great masses of furze ablaze with yellow blossom.

1st January.—Finished "Little Dorrit." I am reading the boys' books in which Campbell revels. I find the "Dragon and the Raven" capital, and was charmed with one about Bruce and Wallace.

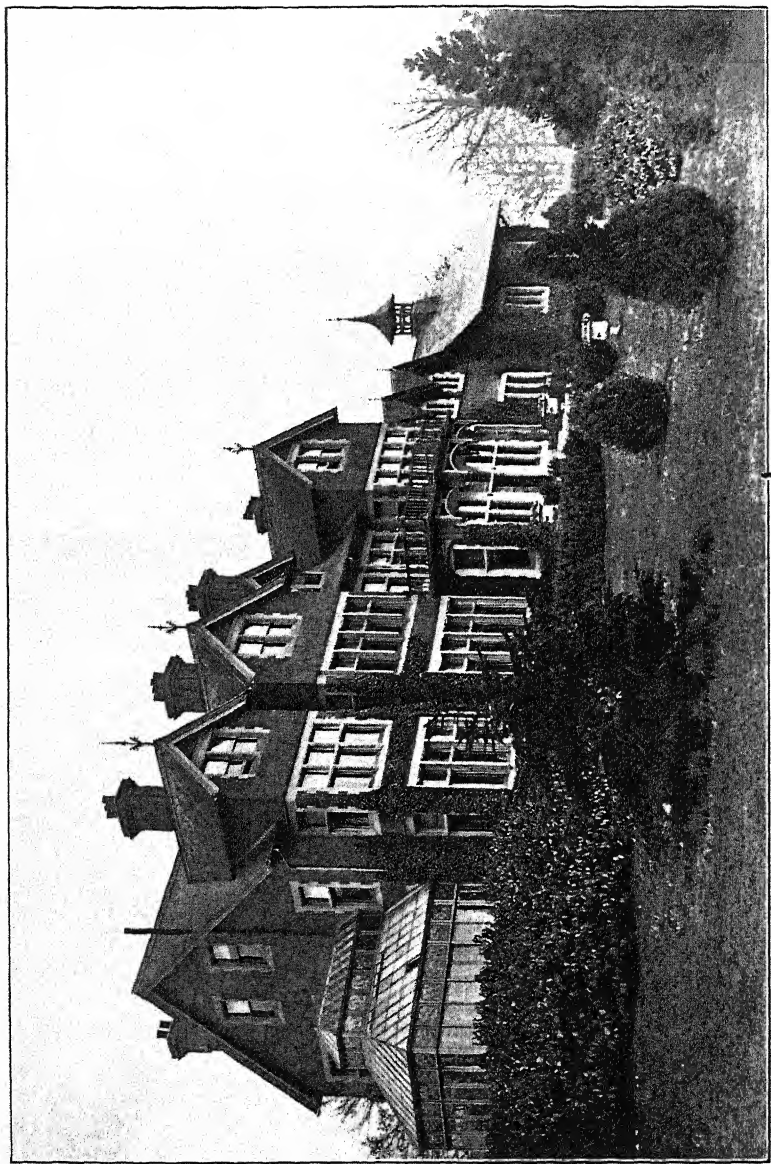
Shortly after his return to Cherwell Edge he fixed upon an ideal site for the home which it was his darling ambition to create. Four miles west of Oxford, on the Eynsham Road, the

<sup>1</sup> A shilling edition of the "Old Missionary" was issued by Mr. Henry Frowde in 1895, and an illustrated one in the following year.









*Photograph*

OAKEN HOLT, CUMNOR, BERKS.



vast plain which stretches westward to the Bristol Channel is broken by a densely wooded ridge, in whose thickest glades nestles Wytham Abbey, the seat of the Earl of Abingdon. On its southern slope, well sheltered from the bitter winds by rising grounds and the noble timber of Wytham woods, are a few sunny acres offering every advantage coveted by a scholar who was also a citizen of the world. They overlook a boundless expanse of the tenderest green, over which the mighty spirit of King Alfred still seems to hover, and which is associated with many a stirring event of our early history. The heights on the opposite side of the great western highway are crowned by Cumnor Church, remarkable even in Oxfordshire. Hard by the ancient fane there stood—

The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall,

sung by Mickle; and the village is still under the glamour thrown by Walter Scott's genius on the half-mythical story of Amy Robsart's ill-requited love and tragic fate. The whole surroundings of Hunter's future nest were as thoroughly English as Oaken Holt, the sweet old Saxon name which he gave to his demesne, in memory of a place which stood near his boyish home in Flintshire. The social environment was equally to his taste. Cumnor has no resident squire, and he could aspire to be the head of the little rural community; while Oxford, with its unrivalled means of culture and its many pleasant friendships, lay almost at his door. Every spare hour during the two following years was given up to planning the interior of Oaken Holt and laying out the park and garden.<sup>1</sup> It was an intense pleasure for one whose family interests were so strong to see the abode which would shelter his old age and give comfort to his remote descendants rising under his directing hand.

In February he again met Mr. W. E. Gladstone. Time was when he looked up to the great casuist as a leader of his

<sup>1</sup> Among the entries in the Oaken Holt visitors' book was a quotation which especially delighted Hunter:—

"Who does his duty is a question  
Too complex to be solved by me,  
But he—I venture the suggestion—  
Does part of his who plants a tree."—LOWELL.



party. In 1887, soon after his return to English life, he told Sir George Birdwood that his views were those of his uncle, the Right Hon. James Wilson, who was a moderate Whig. But his mind was too catholic, his views of life too broad to rest satisfied with the parochialism associated with Mr. Gladstone's measures. The breach between himself and the great party to which he owed hereditary allegiance was widened by its leader's Irish policy. Thus, although he was never a keen politician, his instincts led him into the conservative ranks. His deep respect for Mr. Gladstone's intellectual gifts and the spell cast by his overpowering personality remained in unabated force. Of the visit to Oxford of the great man he wrote:—

*1st February.*—Called on Mr. Gladstone at All Souls, and met him in the evening at the Censor's. He was anxious to go to the theatre, Miss Fortescue having sent him a box. Quite an impressive undergraduate!

*6th February.*—Breakfasted with him at Balliol. After talking for two hours, we strolled with the Master through the College. The youthfulness of the Grand Old Man was amazing. He spoke volubly to Jowett about certain passages in Homer indicating a sense of the sinfulness of sin. To a young fellow fresh from Italy he discoursed on the growth there of a third party whose platform was the independence of the Pope. He enumerated some fifteen Italian statesmen by name, and gave their individual views.

In the following March the Life of the first and only Marquis of Dalhousie saw the light. The proofs had been submitted to Lady Connemara and to the Governor-General's close friend, Dr. Alexander Grant. Both were loud in their expressions of praise, and the latter gave some curious sidelights on Dalhousie's private character:—

FROM DR. ALEXANDER GRANT.

*February 1, 1890.*

I think you say that Lady Dalhousie used to ride with his Lordship on the march, but I never saw her do so. He preferred going quickly about, under the escort of Major T. Ramsay or an A.D.C.; in fact, Lord Dalhousie was usually accompanied by the Commissioner of the Division and some of the civil officers of the district through which he was passing, and he thus gleaned much information of the people and public affairs. Ordinarily he dressed plainly, but on any great occasion he was very particular. On



entering a station where there was a guard of honour to receive him, he wore a black frock-coat; and when he arrived at his tent he would curb in "Maharaja," and, wheeling round, acknowledge the salute with striking dignity. You allude to the perfect harmony which for eight years prevailed in the deliberations of the Calcutta Council. The ascendancy of Lord Dalhousie in Council and the impress of his master-mind in the control of colleagues have always appeared to me strong evidence of his statesmanship and unique force of character. It is well known what were Lord Lawrence's difficulties with his Council, and how much they worried him. Lord Dalhousie always knew exactly what he wanted, and rarely failed to attain it by sagacity and reasonableness.

FROM DR. ALEXANDER GRANT.

*March 31, 1890.*

Be assured that I greatly value the presentation copy of your "Dalhousie." It is an estimate of the man and his work which will live and serve to bridge over the time that must elapse before his private papers can be given to the public. To me your portrait of his Lordship is lifelike in character and historically accurate. I venture to add the opinion that there is no living writer who could have rivalled you in fitness for the task which you have now completed in words so true, so earnest and sympathetic, that I have been deeply affected by them.

In acknowledging a similar present, Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

FROM THE RIGHT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

*April 17, 1890.*

Absence and indisposition have delayed the thanks I owe you for your great kindness in sending me your "Life of Lord Dalhousie," which I hope shortly to find at Hawarden. He was a man as remarkable for his self-sacrificing devotion as for his power. I can never forget seeing him at the Burlington Hotel after his return, and the uncomplaining manner in which he described himself as a wreck.

After seeing "Dalhousie" launched amid the warm approbation of the critics, Hunter paid a visit to Weimar, whither his wife and boys had preceded him. He was received with open arms by the Court circle and the coterie of distinguished men who were attracted there by the hospitality of the Grand Duke.



13th April.—Paid many calls on notabilities. Jessie brings me in for a share of the warm welcome which she receives everywhere.

19th April.—Inspected the Goethe archives at the Schloss. Remarkd his care in making corrections, first in pencil, then inked over, lastly on slips of paper carefully pasted on the addenda. Read an English poem which he composed at twenty on the "Feeling of Unconfidence in Myself."

20th April.—We dined at the palace. I sat next the Grand Duchess and Jessie next the Grand Duke. The dinner-hour was 5.45, and we were all home before eight. Finished reading Ouida's *Puck*, a sad, bad work of genius.

On his return to England at the end of April, he found a controversy raging in Parliament on three bills promoted by politicians of different shades for enlarging the scope of the Indian Legislative Councils. The movement was due wholly to his initiative; and it had the strong support of the Indian Congress. But his robust common sense rejected the scheme put forward by that irresponsible body, which would manufacture electoral colleges wholesale and on a single paper-pattern for the whole of India. He stood forward in *The Times* as a champion of moderate reforms. With the events in his mind which ushered in the French Revolution of 1789 he wrote:—

The setting up of artificial uniformity for all India, by which the voting power would be concentrated in the hands of the Gangetic population, and the sudden conversion of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, which is essentially a Council, into a Legislative Assembly, would involve serious risks; and such a scheme would, after a period of strain, if not of actual danger, inevitably end in a reaction against all progressive measures in India.<sup>1</sup>

To his old Bombay friend, who was on a visit to England, he wrote:—

TO MR. B. M. MALABARI.

July 4, 1890.

The surest means of gaining our end is to convince Indian legislators and the British public that the modifications we ask for are a natural and inevitable development upon the pre-existing lines of advance. It is by taking up this position that I have forced the Congress movement on the acceptance of thinking

<sup>1</sup> *The Academy*, 17th May 1890.



Englishmen; it is by firmly adhering to it that I have saved the Congress movement from the party of extremes within itself, and am now compelling them to retrace their steps.

He had an opportunity of discussing Lord Cross's Bill, which eventually became law, with Mr. Malabari in person; for the editor of the *Indian Spectator* was an honoured guest at Cherwell Edge in the course of the summer. The latter has given Lady Hunter his reminiscences of this visit:—

From Mr. B. M. MALABARI.

[N. D.]

As regards Indian politics and my efforts at social reform, I find Sir William rather slow to move. His one wish in both these matters was to advance "from precedent to precedent." He was as averse to the more hastily formulated demands of the Congress party as to those of the social reformers. I had long debates with him on these subjects at Oxford, and he finally convinced me of the value of Lord Cross's Bill for the enlargement of the scope of Indian Legislative Councils by conceding the semi-elective principle. "I am so glad," he said, "that I have conquered you! You have often had your innings, and I was proud to be beaten by you. But are you convinced this time?" On my replying in the affirmative, he surprised me by asking, "Will you write to *The Times*?" There was no escape. The same evening I posted my letter, which, as Sir William foretold, had a marked effect on both friends and foes of Lord Cross's measure. . . . His friendship did not begin and end with myself. Whatever kindly office I suggested to him for India he performed with alacrity, thanking me for the suggestion, and adding that he was always proud to be of service. The last time that I met my friend was in London, somewhere near the Inns of Court, on the riverside. I was sitting on one of the benches there, listening to a tale of woe poured into my ear by an erring sister, betrayed and deserted with her child. Just as she had done narrating her wrongs, I saw Hunter walking past. It was an unexpected meeting, and the circumstances attendant thereon rather puzzled him. But before I could speak, my friend took in the situation, entered into our purpose, and with moisture in his eyes he gave the girl a sovereign, advising her to go away into the country. We had a long chat after this on the social side of Christianity. His views struck me as unnecessarily pessimistic, but he tried to justify them, winding up with the remark, "Ask Max Müller, ask Birdwood, ask the leaders of society themselves." Talking in this earnest spirit, he carried me off to a friend's office, somewhere about King William Street. He gave me tea there, and a good long talk about India. Before



parting, Hunter put his hands on my shoulders and whispered impressively, "You are a better Christian than many of us." He had evidently been thinking of the little riverside incident. As we shook hands finally, I saw his eyes filling with tears. A hard-headed, but always tender-hearted man was my friend. I little thought—had he a presentiment?—that it was to be our last meeting on earth.

During the whole of this year the "Rulers of India" were steadily flowing from the press. The editor's correspondence with the different authors was enormous, and sometimes twenty letters had to be dealt with daily. His own contributions formed an appreciable fraction of the series. Hardly was "Dalhousie" off his hands than he set to work on a compressed edition of his "Life of the Earl of Mayo." But he regarded the task as mere child's play, and sought for a subject of greater difficulty. On 1st September he sent a proposal to the Secretary of State for India for the issue of four volumes summarising the records of the Bengal Board of Revenue. This scheme had occupied his attention for a quarter of a century, and it included a synopsis of the archives, and a dissertation on the land-law of the Lower Province. His offer was accepted after prolonged negotiation, and he plunged with zest into the congenial task of giving the lay reader a clue to the labyrinth of enactment and custom offered by the Bengal system.

Amongst these numerous responsibilities his instincts as a journalist received the fullest scope. His connection with *The Times* grew closer. It produced three essays on "Child Marriage and enforced Widowhood," the last of which was published on 4th October, with the added dignity of a leading article. Four days afterwards he helped to design a cartoon for *Punch* to illustrate the infant widow's wrongs. It was limned by Mr. Linley Sambourne's deft pencil, and accompanied by some excellent verses, of which Hunter supplied the materials. In December he became a permanent member of the staff of the leading journal. The province assigned to him was Indian affairs, and his articles, which were at first fortnightly but afterwards appeared on Mondays, were eagerly looked for and were copied by other organs of public opinion in India and at home. Though they were, of course,



anonymous, the inimitable style soon betrayed the authorship, and Hunter was thus brought into correspondence with men who, in their several degrees, were making history. Few of these letters can yet be given to the public; but I have been permitted to quote from one written from Simla by the then Commander-in-Chief in India, who now fills a higher post at home.

FROM GENERAL SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS.

September 6, 1891.

I am aware that the Cabinet must be more or less guided by the wishes and feelings of the people, but the people require to be educated in matters of foreign policy, not only by the statesmen who are intrusted with the administration of national affairs, but also by the press. India is so far away from England, and matters connected with that country excite so little popular interest, that our peculiar position as an Eastern Power and our Asiatic relations with Russia are absolutely unknown to the general public, and consequently are neither studied nor cared for by our leading politicians. I much doubt whether, with the exception perhaps of Lord Salisbury, any of Her Majesty's late or present Ministers realise what an occupation of even Northern Afganistan by a Russian army would mean to India. The military authorities at home certainly know little or nothing of our position out here, or they would never have imagined that the progress of Russia towards India could be stopped by sending a British force to Eastern Europe or Asia Minor, while we in India were left to depend on our own resources. Your intimate acquaintance with India will, I am sure, lead to the conclusion that the defence of that country is a political even more than a military question, and that if we were to maintain a passive attitude in the event of a Russian advance, we should not only lose our military prestige and alienate the Afghans and border tribes, but involve ourselves in internal complications which would most seriously endanger the stability of our Eastern Empire.

Hunter's utterances in *The Times* were authoritative because they were based on information derived from first hand. The influence thus wielded by him during the last decade of his life was enormous, and it was exercised with a single-hearted desire to promote the true interests of India.

Journalism was with Hunter as the hours given by most men to day-dreams or amusement. The solid business of his life was the "History of British India," the crowning



effort of a brilliant career. But he was doomed to disappointment even more severe than befell Carlyle when the fruit of prolonged labour was made to serve the base uses of kindling a housemaid's fire. On leaving Simla in 1887, he had entrusted the Legislative Department with four cases of manuscripts bearing on the earlier annals of the Empire. When he found himself settled at Oxford he sent for this precious charge. Long and anxiously was it awaited, and at last came the terrible news that the boxes had gone down in the S.S. *Nepal*, which struck on the Shagston Rock, off Plymouth, on the night of 10th December 1890. After weeks of suspense Hunter learnt with joy that they had been salvaged, and in due course they were delivered at Cherwell Edge. Alas! the contents were a mass of pulp, illegible and practically destroyed. The blow was crushing, for amongst them were many documents borrowed from the archives of the great native houses, which could never be replaced. With all his energy he felt that to repair the mischief was impossible. His dejection was so profound that Lady Hunter became alarmed, and suggested that he would find some distraction in studying the disputes which was then in progress between labour and capital. He would doubtless soon have mastered the problem in all its bearings, while his tact and knowledge of the world might well have discovered a less clumsy expedient than the strikes which are sapping the bases of our commerce. For a moment he embraced the suggestion, but with the return of his buoyant spirits the instincts of a man of letters gained the mastery. The vast design, steadily kept in view for a quarter of a century, was perforce relinquished; but he reflected that his framework might be reduced and the romantic story of the rise of British Empire in the East might still be depicted.

After Mr. Malabari's return to India Hunter gave him his views on a measure which was stirring Hindu sentiment to its depths. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, learnt with the deepest pity the cruelties inflicted on countless child-wives, who were compelled to assume all the responsibilities of marriage while they were still physically unfit to endure them. On 19th February 1891 a Bill passed the Legislative Council, which raised the age of consent to cohabitation. This step was



warmly supported by the more advanced Hindus of the Western Presidency. In Bengal, however, it evoked a degree of opposition as fierce as was encountered by another measure of social reform—the prohibition of suttee.

TO MR. B. M. MALABARI.

February 27, 1891.

As to the "age of consent," I deeply sympathise with you in your efforts to make the reactionary party listen to reason. I am also at one with you in feeling disappointed at the rather halting measure of the Government of India. But if you had to do with reform in England, you would find the reactionary party still more slow to admit new ideas, and the Government (whether Whig or Tory) still more apprehensive of stirring up a storm of public opinion against it. The truth is, that the more constitutional a Government is, the more strongly does it feel constrained to follow public opinion, and not outstrip it. It is only German Emperors who can reform on their own account. So take heart again, my dear friend, and be sure that a real advance has been made in the meanwhile, and that public opinion in India on the question of child-marriage takes a new departure from the agitation which you have stirred up.

He returned to the subject in an article, which had the place of honour in the February number of the *Contemporary Review*, on "Popular Movements in India." The author traced the influences which had produced three distinct steps in advance taken by our Government. The offers made by feudatory princes to aid in Imperial defence was accepted, the bases of the Legislative Councils were enlarged, and the demands made by social reformers for the protection of child-brides were complied with. No year since India passed under the Crown was as fruitful in concessions as 1891, and Hunter might, with perfect justice, have assumed the credit of having prompted each reform.

The same month saw the issue of an abridged edition of the "Life of the Earl of Mayo," as one of the "Rulers of India" series. The difficult task of compression was performed with consummate skill; and "The Man," his military and foreign policy, his financial reforms, and his dealings with feudatory states are sketched with a lifelike touch. The "Earl of Mayo" is one of the few exceptions to the rule that abridgments are



wanting in interest. Among the letters of approval which it evoked are two from Dr. H. G. Liddell, Dean of Christ Church, a name familiar to schoolboys in connection with Greek Lexicography:—

My statement respecting Christ Church Viceroys requires a little amendment. I find that (reckoning Lord Cornwallis as a *single* reign, and adding Mr. Canning as a positive appointment, though he never assumed the reins of government) there have been twenty-three Governors-General and Viceroys. Of these, *eight* have been Christ Church men, so that we have furnished more than one-third, or, if Lord Cornwallis be reckoned as two, exactly one-third of the number. As to Warren Hastings, he was Captain of Westminster School, and would undoubtedly have been elected to a Christ Church studentship had not his uncle (who supported him at school) died, when his guardian removed him from the school and sent him to India. Perhaps, if he had come to us, he might have followed quite a different course of life, and gained less glory while he avoided much persecution.

Dr. Nicholl, the Headmaster of Westminster, was so much grieved at losing his most promising scholar, that he offered himself to bear the boy's expenses at school.

From the DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH.

October 5, 1891.

Reading in your memoir of Lord Mayo the story of the Eaton beagles and the subscription, recalls to mind a similar letter of Mr. Canning to his son, whom I knew well at Oxford. Young Canning wrote from Eton asking for money to pay subscriptions to cricket club, &c., adding that he "wanted £5, or else he should get a licking." The father replied: "Dear Carlo, I send you £2; you must take the change out in licking." I do not know whether the author of Lord Canning's Life will think this little story worth repeating.

In April the Clarendon Press issued another compilation from Hunter's ever-busy pen—a "School History and Geography of Northern India." He used frequently to inveigh against the repulsive dryness of text-books which strew the path of knowledge with unnecessary thorns. His own were models of luminous treatment, and may be studied with advantage by learners of every age.

Hunter's powers as an organiser were hardly less conspicuous



than those which placed him in the foremost rank as a man of letters and a journalist. These found ample scope in May, when he made arrangements for a great meeting of the "Countess of Dufferin Fund" for providing medical aid to Indian women. At his suggestion it was held at the Sheldonian Theatre on 25th May, when the foundress was received by the whole *Posse Comitatus* of the University, the Vice-Chancellor at its head. At the luncheon which preceded the memorable gathering there were "half a century of Governors-General," represented by themselves, their sons or widows, besides all the recent Governors of Indian provinces with their wives.<sup>1</sup> His efforts received warm acknowledgment from the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava and the Executive Committee of her noble fund.

These exertions were undergone in the teeth of influenza. Raja Peary Mohan Mukharji, C.S.I., of Uttarpara, told him that the disease was raging in Calcutta, and added that he had observed that smokers were especially liable to it. Hunter enjoyed a good cigar, but his moderation was as conspicuous in this as in every other pleasure. In his case a highly-strung nervous system was probably at the root of repeated attacks of a most insidious malady which conquered him in the end.

In sickness and incessant labour his interest in his children's welfare never slackened. The elder boy, William, was preparing for the army at Sandhurst, and Hunter visited him there in April, and attended the Cadets' Parade and the service in the College Chapel. When, a few months later, the great question of a regiment came up, he used all his private influence to obtain a commission in one possessing more than average distinction. The young soldier was thus gazetted to the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and began his career under the fairest auspices. The younger son, Campbell, was still at Eton, and had already made choice of a profession which, more than any other, affords a "career open to talents,"—in Napoleonic phrase. While still suffering from intense depression the father wrote:—

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Campbell of 4th May 1891.



TO CAMPBELL.

June 4, 1891.

We were so sorry that we could not visit you to-day, but we must try to arrange for you to come later, or give you a good time in London. Tell me which you would like best. We entertained a great engineer on Sunday, and I dragged myself out, in spite of influenza, to give him dinner at Balliol, and to take his whole party of four to the concert. For I thought he might possibly be of use to you, dear. Sometimes I feel as if I could not show my love enough to you and Willy, it is so difficult to do so between men; and now that Mabel is gone, there is apt to be a reserve in the family. But please be sure that I love you dearly, and spend all my life in planning and working for you both. You are our great and only happiness now.

In the meantime Oaken Holt was steadily rising from the patch of coarse pasturage purchased from Lord Abingdon, and by the beginning of July it was ready for occupation. On the 10th the family flitted thither from Cherwell Edge, and great was Hunter's delight in finding himself, for the second time in his life, under a roof-tree of his own creation. Much remained to do within the house and in its little park, but his consummate taste soon transformed his rugged acres into an ideal English home. As soon as they were fairly settled, he set out on a riding tour over Marlborough Downs with Mr. Vernon Lushington, who thus referred to the intense pleasure derived by all intellectual men from his companion's society:—

FROM HIS HONOUR JUDGE LUSHINGTON.

August 30, 1891.

My dear Hunter, mein General, my comrade! here I am at home again, full of recollections of our delightful time together, and of all your friendly goodness to me. This trip will be my "feature in the year," which is one great office of a wise man's holiday. Would that I could think that you had found your ring! Not knowing when you last felt its presence and when you first missed it, I can only deal in this vague wish. The loss of this ring was the one flaw in our enterprise. You will give me one line perhaps to tell me whether you have found it. The sun must have shone upon you to-day in your solitary march to Oaken Holt. Would I had been trotting or walking by your side — making mental excursions to the Far East, and sometimes holding out to you a cup of Positivist cold water! Pray remember me most kindly



to Lady Hunter. My visit to Oaken Holt was a very good first feature in my expedition.

In October Hunter had his first experience of the effect of Oxford's encircling rivers on the plain over which he gazed from the secure heights of Oaken Holt:—

*9th October.*—Tremendous floods, which rose so quickly that the cattle on Cumnor meadows were saved only by men chasing them on horseback and flogging them through the water to high ground. The eye ranges on all sides but one on a vast lake fringed with forests. It is dotted with haystacks which resemble rocky islets, while hedgerows and lines of willow jut like promontories into this inland sea. The effects of sunset on its placid surface are unspeakably beautiful.

After describing the floods to his son Campbell at Eton, he added:—

*15th October.*—Willy sailed from St. Petersburg last Tuesday, or rather he was to sail if the ship could force her way through the ice, which was already blocking the harbour. I do hope that he met with none of those icebergs of which he speaks so lightly. They are fearsome fowl to encounter in the dark with full speed on. . . . I am glad to say that our tipsy gardener is getting quite strong again. His hand is out of its sling and healing fast. He tells me that he can get work as soon as he leaves us on dismissal, Good news indeed; for the thought of that poor wife of his, with winter coming on and no wages, weighed down my spirits.

On the same day he visited the venerable Sir Harry Verney, Bart., at Claydon Manor, and wrote:—

Had an hour and a half's talk with Miss Florence Nightingale, my hostess's sister, on her couch upstairs. The brother of the King of Siam, Prince Damrong, is staying here, and Mr. F. Verney is to accompany him on a tour in British India.

The travellers set out in December, and Miss Nightingale warmly acknowledged the assistance given by Hunter towards rendering the journey a success:—

FROM MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

*December 22, 1891.*

Although I know that Mr. F. Verney has conveyed his thanks to you for your invaluable introductions, yet we cannot forbear



trying to express to you how grateful we are for your thoughtful kindness in giving this immense help. They have not gone to India as sightseers, but seriously to learn what is useful in our institutions. The representative men, administrative and political, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Hindus and Mahammadans, to whom you have been at such pains to introduce them, will be magnificent means to the end, in the truest meaning of the adjective. Siam is your debtor.









*Photograph*

LIBRARY, OAKEN HOLT



## CHAPTER XX

### UNREST IN INDIA

It is impossible to deny that the relations between the dominant race in India and their native fellow-subjects have deteriorated since the Empire passed under the government of the Crown. The tactics of the Congress agitation are in part responsible for the widening breach, but Englishmen are themselves not free from blame. The late Sir Harry Verney told some home truths in writing thus:—

FROM SIR HARRY VERNEY, Bart.

*February 15, 1892.*

When my Indian letters reach me my thoughts always turn to you, my dear Sir William Hunter, because I believe that you, more than any one else, can influence our countrymen in India in the direction I so earnestly desire that they would take. My letters received yesterday speak of the unfriendliness of the Queen's Indian subjects towards us, owing, in a considerable degree, to the scurrility and violence of the Indian press. But what gives the press-writing against us so much power? The want of consideration on the part of our countrymen towards the natives; the contempt that we entertain, and too often manifest towards them; our unwillingness to treat them with the regard that many among them deserve, and to place them in positions of trust which would raise their character and strengthen their cordial feelings towards us. While I was on Lord W. Bentinck's staff, I recollect his sentiments of good-will towards those whom he had governed in India, and I can never forget the reply of Sir Herbert Edwardes, who paid me a visit here shortly after his return, to my question when I asked him: "Did you ever know a native whom you would trust as implicitly as you would an English gentleman?" "As many as in England," was the answer. I am aware that his experience had been among Indians of high class for probity and courage. But if there are such men in India, surely we ought to find them out, trust them, and make them our friends. Lord W. Bentinck also said to me: "India is governed by the best civil servants in



the world." That was true then, and I believe is true now. Responsibility calls out any good quality that a man possesses, and every civil servant who takes up his duty is at once clothed with a power for good over it unknown to a newly-appointed official in any other country. . . . My only wish is that our countrymen in India should be guided in their intercourse with Indians by experience and wisdom such as yours. I believe that our hold of the country depends on the conduct of individual Englishmen.

Hunter's profound respect for his correspondent's sister-in-law, Miss Florence Nightingale, led him to dedicate his next work to her. It appeared in March 1892, under the title, "Bombay, 1885-89: a Study in Indian Administration,"<sup>1</sup> and its scope is accurately defined in a letter addressed by the author in the previous year to the publicist who suggested the task:—

TO MR. B. M. MALABARI.

March 26, 1891.

It is clearly understood between us that the object of the book is not the praise or censure of individual men, but a careful and readable account of the progress and administration of Bombay during the years of Lord Reay's governorship.

Beginning with a sketch of the country and the races which inhabit its four speech-divisions, the author proceeded to explain the framework of the government alike in regard to its internal constitution and its relation with the galaxy of feudatory States. The most valuable portion of the work is the chapters on the machinery of British administration, and this alone gives it great and permanent value for those who are charged with the solemn duty *regere imperio populos*. The chapter which deals with the native chiefs is full of curious information, but is, perhaps, couched in too optimistic a strain. Mr. Malabari explains the rationale of these views in an undated letter to Lady Hunter:—

I must say that I fear that his generous good-will towards the native Princes carried him too far. When I told him so he replied laughingly, "We have set up a standard for the Princes to live up to!" Who could resist such a line of argument as this? I did not wonder at Miss Nightingale and other friends welcoming the volume in terms of cordial appreciation.

<sup>1</sup> London: Henry Frowde, Amen Corner. *Bombay Spectator* Office, 1892.



The heroine of Scutari wrote :—

From Miss FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

*April 18, 1892.*

We cannot thank you enough for your invaluable study of Indian administration. Oh, that we could have a similar description of each of the great princes of India from your own hand ! And not of India alone. How greatly would this country benefit if we secured records of her condition and progress from such a philosopher as you. Quetelet and Sir John Herschel have both said truly that we British plunge impulsively into legislation without any regard for the past. They said that we should always place on record what we expect to accomplish by our Acts of Parliament, so that every new measure should not be an experiment, but an experience.

In acknowledging a presentation copy, Lord Connemara, the late Governor of Madras, described one of those curious types of intellectual being produced by the impact of Western science on the subtlety and conservatism of the East. Of the then Prime Minister of Mysore he wrote :—

From LORD CONNEMARA.

*April 19, 1882.*

The Diwan is an excellent man, profoundly versed in Sanskrit literature, and well posted in English constitutional lore. He is a good example of that very remarkable species, the Anglo-Hindu philosopher, who seems to devote his heart to Brahma and his head to Herbert Spencer.

At the end of July Hunter had one of those sea-voyages which he enjoyed so thoroughly as a guest at the trial trip of the P. and O. steamer *Himalaya*. Its incidents are thus related in a letter from Cherbourg Harbour :—

TO LADY HUNTER.

*July 31, 1892.*

Campbell and I started from Tilbury yesterday at daybreak, and, after a delightful sail, reached Cherbourg about 6 P.M. In the afternoon we kept close to the English shore. This morning, as I am writing, the French fleet is sailing into the port in a long train of grey moving monsters. A Russian frigate close by is saluting, and its smoke is gushing in through our port-holes.



Then we shall have return salutes, and yet more from an American and an English war-vessel lying near us, whose flags are dipping in fine fashion. Nothing can be uglier than a French ironclad. It looks like a floating chemical works which has gone to ruin, with ramshackle towers for making acid, and everything in disorder. At ten we have service; at eleven we go on shore in the launch to visit the arsenal; return to lunch, and then on shore again in the afternoon to visit a château where there is a horse-breeding establishment. The P. and O. are magnificent hosts; they find everything for us on board, and carriages on shore. To-morrow we run across to Cowes to see the German Emperor sail in. On Tuesday we hope to get a sight of the first races of the Cowes Regatta, and to reach the Thames in time for the theatre at 9 P.M.

Lockhart says of Sir Walter Scott that he regarded his own literary gifts as of small account when compared with the exploits of the great leaders of human action. Hunter had the same respect for those who were privileged to make history. Amongst this little group Lord Roberts stood first. He wrote touching an appreciative notice in *The Times* :—

FROM GENERAL LORD ROBERTS.

August 9, 1892.

I must thank you for the kind thought that the article should be so written as to prevent "a single rival grudging my success." I felt that is scarcely possible, though I have not much to complain of on that score. I remember Lord Lytton writing to me when I was in Afghanistan that "prosperity, not adversity, proves a man's friend." This is true, no doubt; but I am glad to think that, with scarcely an exception, the friends of my youth are my friends still.

On 18th August Hunter was commissioned by the India Office to issue a third edition of his panoramic view of "The Indian Empire," which appeared originally as a volume of the "Indian Gazetteer." The census returns of 1891 had rendered the statistics of population obsolete, and the historical section required revision by the light of recent researches into Hindu and Mahammadan history. The task of compiling a book containing 800 pages was shared with Mr. H. Morse Stephens; and Messrs. W. H. Allen, publishers to the India Office, agreed to produce it in the following year. Hunter wrote to his son regarding this and other literary works :—



TO CAMPBELL.

September 29, 1892.

On Tuesday I delivered the last sheets of my "Brief History of the Indian Peoples" (its twentieth edition), finally revised, to the Clarendon Press, and next day I began my new work, a fresh edition of "The Indian Empire." I have got it fairly under weigh after three or four months of wearisome preliminary labour. So my poor novel again vanishes into space!

He was now the recognised champion of India in our English journalism, but he was far from approving of the crude methods of democracy. Thus he supported a measure which caused no small stir in the summer of 1892-93. It was a notification, suddenly issued by Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, withdrawing a large class of heinous offences tried in his province from the cognisance of juries. Hunter rose superior to public clamour. He saw that Sir Charles's motives were unimpeachable, and had the moral courage to espouse the unpopular side. His services were fully recognised by the much-abused Lieutenant-Governor:—

FROM SIR CHARLES ELLIOTT.

January 4, 1893.

As to the Jury Trial agitation, our friends here are much comforted by the support of *The Times* and the *Daily News*. We are resting on our oars now, and there is nothing to be done till the Secretary of State delivers himself. The matter is a very simple one. That juries were often corrupt and their verdicts in important cases were a scandal which Government could not pass over, is to my mind an absolute certainty. We could approach the remedy in two ways—by notification, or by altering the law so as to make a jury's verdict less final. The Government<sup>1</sup> thought that the latter course would be the more unpopular, and decided on the former. I think they were wrong as events have turned out, and I believe they have come round to this view, and will consent to amending the law.

The result should serve as a lesson for Indian administrators. As in the case of Lord Ripon's well-meant reform in 1883, the "Jury Notification" provoked a veritable tempest. Again the Calcutta lawyers were the steel head of the shaft

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the Government of India, which judiciously kept in the background and allowed the full vials of public wrath to be poured on its lieutenant's head.



fashioned by the Indian press, and the clamour grew so loud that Lord Lansdowne had recourse to the weak-kneed device of a Commission. Its verdict was that a return to the *status quo* was advisable. Thus a useful measure was defeated simply because its framers declined to pave the way for its adoption by a temperate and timely appeal to public opinion.

The dawn of 1893 found Hunter's tireless pen employed in the revision of "The Indian Empire." The speed at which the task was performed is shown in a letter to his younger son:—

TO CAMPBELL.

February 4, 1893.

To-day I got off the last proof-sheet of my "Indian Empire," except the Index, which is now in type. To-morrow I get to my lecture for the Society of Arts. It must be in print on the 10th, and would have been finished long ago but for the terrible pressure of revising the "Indian Empire" against time—850 pages in  $2\frac{3}{4}$  months!

This address was delivered on 16th February to a crowded audience presided over by the Marquis of Ripon. Its subject was a familiar one, "The Progress of India under the Crown," but the lecturer always contrived to clothe the tritest theme with new beauties. The late Colonel Malleson described the impression gained by its perusal, and the stronger feelings evoked by Hunter's praise of his own "Life of Lord Clive," which appeared in the course of this month.

FROM COLONEL G. B. MALLESON.

March 14, 1893.

Your lecture was splendid. I congratulate you, though I can't tell you how much it delighted me. You have not yet reached your goal. . . . I value your praise of my work most highly, but the words regarding "Clive" and its writer are calculated to upset the balance of his brain. My wife says that I have grown two inches since this morning, and wonders why! I really feel like a pupil of Michael Angelo, who, by a bold and vivid sketch, had merited and won the great master's approval.

Hunter's younger son had finally adopted engineering as a profession, and to test his powers he appeared at the preliminary examination for entrance to the Woolwich Academy.



The father watched every effort of his boys with the keenest interest, and spared no pains to smooth their path in life. His advice given in the following letter must have been most inspiring :—

TO CAMPBELL.

*March 1, 1893.*

I have been thinking a great deal about you during the last fortnight, and of the gallant fight you are making to pass the examination at so short a notice. But the truth is, that most of the things that we do successfully in life are done with much strain, and the feeling that we cannot succeed till we find that we have succeeded. So keep a brave heart, and be sure that, whether you fail or win, we shall be confident that you have done your best, my dear son. The difference between one man and one nation and another is that the weak man or the base-minded nation fails and accepts failure, while the strong man or the noble nation fails and looks upon a present failure only as the foundation of future success. The English have been beaten quite as often as other peoples, but with the English failure or defeat only means the first step to victory. I was delighted by your last letter. You are getting quite a literary style. Cultivate it in writing to us and to Willy, and in all your essays at school. It is one of the best possessions which a young man can have on his entrance into life, and is worth more to him than a legacy of a thousand pounds. That dreadful nightmare, the new edition of "The Indian Empire," is at last off my chest. But it has left me so utterly wearied, that one evening, for the first time for many a year, I fell into a deep sleep while your mother was reading aloud to me after dinner, and did not wake up till half-past ten! As you justly say, it has been a mine of gold, but has required a good deal of mining.

His accession to the Unionist party was announced in March by an acceptance of the chairmanship of a meeting condemnatory of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill held at Cumnor on 27th March. Before publicly declaring himself, he sought for information as to the machinery at work for conducting the agitation against that ill-starred measure :—

TO CAPTAIN F. C. LODER SYMONDS.

*March 20, 1893.*

I am obliged for your letter received this morning, but before I can accept its invitation to preside at a Unionist meeting at Cumnor, there are one or two points which I should like to submit



for your consideration. I have declined two offers to enter Parliament on the ground that my work in life is literature and not politics. In fact, the main object of my settling in the country was to enable me to concentrate my time on a History of India from original materials and records, which I have spent twenty-five years in collecting and putting into shape. The completion of the work will occupy another five years, and I should require to feel a very clear call of duty to lead me to abandon the position which I have definitely taken up. I recognise that, under certain circumstances, the great question now before the country might constitute such a call of duty, but I am by no means sure that those circumstances have yet arisen in this neighbourhood. Unless there is a clear call of duty, I prefer to remain in my present position as a private well-wisher and helper in the good cause.

Captain Loder Symonds' reply convinced Hunter that co-operation would be in accordance with duty to the public at a grave political crisis, and he presided at a Unionist meeting held at Cumnor on 27th March.

In August the Hunters paid a first visit to Ireland, and passed a few delightful days with the family of Miss Bluetie Knox, a close friend of their lost daughter and a frequent guest at Oaken Holt. They witnessed the annual celebration of the relief of Derry in 1698, and, after exploring the Northern counties in cars and sailing boats, they tarried for a week at Killybegs Harbour in South Donegal. The country seemed to Hunter full of a prehistoric past:—

TO CAMPBELL.

*August 25, 1893.*

Some parts of this wild north-west coast of Ireland are pretty much in the same state as was ancient Britain when seen by Julius Cæsar. In this parish, with 1500 inhabitants, the priest tells us that there is not a single plough. The people dig their oat-fields with a long-handled spade, and carry the manure in creels on their backs. We saw a family yesterday bringing home the harvest in their arms, and storing the sheaves in the living room of their cabin, from which the pigs were ejected to make room for the corn. In another part we saw the ancient British pack-pony winding up a precipitous path, and encouraged by mingled maledictions and endearments in the early British tongue (or a dialect very near to it) by a half-naked boy behind. Beneath, in the bay, the fishermen use the wattle-canoes, or currachs, which their ancestors used at the time of the Roman invasion, only they are covered with layers of tarred canvas instead of with skins. In



these frail wicker-work barks, light enough for a man to carry on his back, they fish as far out as Tory Island, thirty miles from the mainland. We bought two models of them, one for Colonel Knox, who is a great collector, the other for you.

He wrote again from Enniskillen :—

TO CAMPBELL.

*August 30, 1893.*

We had a good time at Killybegs Harbour, and a glorious drive to the giant cliffs of Slieve Leigh. Then we proceeded to Bundoran, "the one watering-place of the north-west coast," on the opposite side of Lough Donegal. The "one watering-place" consisted of a long evil-smelling street, littered with hay, paper bags, and horse-droppings, and an equally foul fore-shore consisting at low tide of a wide expanse of blackish flat rocks and of dirty sand. At high tide the water came up to the cliffs, and the place was comparatively clean and rather pretty. We stayed there for two mornings, wandering on the noble promontories which bear the full brunt of the Atlantic. There we spent the whole day, reading and watching the waves dash themselves on the rocks, in a wild region of seaweed and screaming gulls. Yesterday we sailed from this place in a small boat on the island-studded Lough Erne, but its placid freshwater beauties struck us as tame and commonplace after the rock-girt majesty of the Atlantic.

In October he received from Lord Wantage a nomination as Deputy-Lieutenant of Berks, and was afterwards made a Justice of the Peace for that county and Oxfordshire. The duties involved were performed as punctually as if he were a many-acred squire with a superabundance of leisure. Regarding one of his Bench sessions he wrote :—

TO CAMPBELL.

*December 18, 1893.*

To-day I rode the cob over to the Petty Sessions at Abingdon. There were only a few petty cases—a bad son refusing to support his aged mother; two poor wretches who had gone into Baggally Woods and were caught putting a ferret down a rabbit-hole (fined 5s. each and 7s. costs); and four evil-looking boys who were brought up for discharging catapults on the highway. I found that, in order to convict them, we must have evidence that they frightened or hurt some one, or did damage to property. So I cross-examined the still more evil-looking policeman who had haled them before us, and as there was no evidence of this, I got the Bench of Justices



to dismiss the case. Poor urchins; England has ceased to be a free country if a lad cannot fire a pellet from his catapult at a bird in the hedge on a parish road!

Greater events came under his ken at the close of this year, which is memorable in Indian history as marking the commencement of fierce discord between the Hindus and Mussalmans. Their relations were never very cordial, for the first revere the cow as a deity, and the second use her flesh as an article of diet. But their mutual hatred was made to serve a more sinister cause by Hindu wire-pullers, who have a faculty for plotting as pronounced as that shown by Chinese or Sicilian secret societies. In 1893 they formed associations in Northern India, ostensibly for the protection of the sacred cow, but the movement was, in reality, directed against our own *régime*. Mahammadans were boycotted, and attempts to supply British troops with beef provoked rioting attended with loss of life. Some light on the genesis of an agitation which will assuredly make itself felt in the future is cast by a letter from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces:—

FROM SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE.

[N. D.]

I was very glad to see that you thought that I had taken the proper line in the Anti-Cow-Killing movement. Endeavours are being made by the Congress party here to minimise it, and I am not at all sure that the higher authorities would not have preferred something flabbier. I think, however, I have put the fear of God into them for some time. But the feeling of the Hindus is not good. They are persuaded that their time is near at hand. The Mahammadans are getting disgusted. Our new representative arrangements have left them "out of it;" and unless we show them that we mean to support their rights against the Hindu demands they may join the Congress agitation. Lord Lansdowne made a straightforward declaration of policy at Agra, but they are all opposed to doing anything.

The disquietude at home was increased by the appearance of fresh symptoms of a volcanic condition in India. News came that the trunks of the noble mango trees which are the chief ornament of the northern districts had been smeared by unknown hands with a mixture of cow-hair and mud. The portent spread far and wide, and although many thousands



must have been in the secret, the minutest inquiries failed to cast any light upon it. The movement recalled the equally mysterious distribution of unleavened cakes which heralded the Mutiny of 1857, and Sanskrit scholars connected it with the belief entertained throughout India that the world had entered on its final period of existence. The greatest of them thus replied to a question put by Hunter:—

FROM PROFESSOR E. B. COWELL.

May 6, 1894.

There is a general impression among Hindus that in the Kali Yug—our Iron Age—things will grow worse and worse. The Vishnu Purana mentions as one of its signs that “the earth will be venerated only for its mineral treasures.” This is explained by the commentary, “there will be no *tirthas*—no places held sacred and made the objects of pilgrimage.”

The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces attributed the puerile device to the machinations of itinerant religious mendicants (*sādhus*), social pests who batten on the superstition of the people, and are the bitterest foes of our rule.

FROM SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE.

June 11, 1894.

I have read your *Times* articles on the Hindu *versus* Mahamadan question and the tree-daubing scare, and I hope they may have some effect in quieting the anxiety felt in England on both subjects. There is much talk of mutiny and rebellion, and the ruling race has not appeared in a very dignified position. As to the origin of the strange marks on trees, there is little doubt that they are the work of *sādhus*. What they are intended to signify I know not, and I question if the people themselves are any wiser. Whatever the purpose may be, the effect is to cause uneasiness in the public mind.

In the general alarm another agitation was for the moment forgotten. Great Britain is the chosen home of the man with one idea, bred of the large class which possesses wealth, leisure, and the redundant energies of our race without the culture or experience which render these gifts useful to mankind. Among the most mischievous of the species were the Anti-Opium fanatics, whose clamour had led in the previous July to the



appointment of a roving Commission to inquire into the alleged evils produced by the drug on the Indian population. Hunter's special knowledge stood him in good stead at this juncture, and he told the truth regarding opium in its economic and moral aspect in the columns of the *Economist*. His attitude in *The Times* was inspired by the same judicial calmness, but it did not altogether satisfy his Mentor.

FROM SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

July 10, 1894.

I should like to see you take up a more militant line. You have a great position, the highest honour, ample means, immense knowledge, a philosophical mind, and a literary style trenchant, imaginative, and pure. Let me conjure you to make your varied powers felt in guiding the destinies of the Empire. Throw the scabbard away, and fight out our salvation from the ruin that threatens us at the hands of the sordid and arrogant crew which is permitted to have such undue weight with the public and in Parliament. Ponder over the Opium Commission as a pertinent instance of the moral cowardice of our responsible statesmen. They knew the case for opium perfectly well, and yet saddled India with a bill amounting to many thousands, merely to propitiate an ignorant and mischievous clamour.

Happily for our Indian revenues and the well-being of a great province, the Opium Commission set at rest for ever an agitation which might have crippled both. Its members went forth, some of them prepared to curse, and others with open minds; they returned to bless. Their Report, presented to Parliament in 1895, did not recommend the prohibition of opium growth and manufacture. India is under a deep debt of gratitude to the President, Lord Brassey, and his colleagues.

The Indian Cotton Duties formed another topic which stirred the public mind at this time. Hunter's diary relates:—

9th March.—Finished my weekly article for *The Times*, mainly on the Budget and Cotton Duties. The struggle is between India and Manchester, and I have had anxious work in steering clear of our mill-owners, and yet securing justice for India.

The continued fall in the value of the rupee had caused serious embarrassment to the Indian Exchequer, and rendered a tax on imported cottons necessary. But Lancashire, with



her vast Parliamentary interest, blocked the way. The position was pregnant with danger, for experience has shown that a selfish financial policy is the gravest source of discord between an Empire and its dependencies. A compromise between the conflicting interests was at length affected, mainly through the influence of the leading journal, under which five per cent. was levied on imported cotton goods, with a countervailing excise duty on the similar produce of Indian mills.

Hunter contrived to bear his part in these controversies during a course of visits to country-houses. In the course of this progress he wrote :—

TO CAMPBELL.

*February 5, 1894.*

We shall be truly delighted to get back to the daily round of books and writing. One very soon begins to feel the worthlessness of a life that yields nothing, and ten days of idle visiting always suffice to produce a sense of meanness in me. We came in for an outburst of private theatricals. Your mother complains, and not unjustly, that musicians and actors are always talking of themselves and their art. But the professional artiste, male or female, is a modest and self-repressive person compared to the amateur. Each one of the performers, from the stage manager or the prompter to the walking young gentleman and the leading lady, is convinced that he or she has been the moving spirit of the whole concern. It is amusing enough if you happen to be in a cynical humour.

In June 1894 he received an appeal which there was no resisting. His early friend, Mr. Brian Hodgson, had passed into his rest in May at the patriarchal age of ninety-four. The widow was moved, by a noble obituary notice in *The Times* from Hunter's pen, to request that he would undertake a memoir of the venerable scholar. The task was by no means easy, for Hodgson had survived all his contemporaries, and his splendid work for India was well-nigh forgotten. In announcing his acceptance of the proposal to a common friend he wrote :—

TO DR. R. NEEDHAM CUST.

*June 14, 1894.*

I do not take your rather despondent view about the want of interest in Hodgson's life. To me it is a deeply touching and



interesting career, and, if I were to do the work slowly and artistically, I feel sure that Hodgson would be the most fascinating personality yet produced by the Indian services. The pathos of the early life of intense intellectual acquisitiveness in many directions spent by the solitary student in the Himalayas, then half a century of another kind of solitude passed among the scholars of his age, who recognised him as a master in his own way, but whose ways were not as his, and from whose precision of method he shrank. It is a life which will respond to sympathetic treatment.

The commencement of the new work was delayed until Hunter's great summary of the records relating to the Permanent Settlement of Bengal had been published in London.<sup>1</sup> The four volumes contain a *précis* of many thousand letters preserved in the archives of the Calcutta Board of Revenue, illustrating the early history of Lord Cornwallis' land legislation. A key to the labyrinth was afforded by a preliminary dissertation which defined the phases assumed by the various proprietary rights in the soil of the Lower Provinces during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The work was dedicated to an old Indian friend, who was thus addressed by the author:—

TO SIR ALFRED C. LYALL.

June 15, 1894.

I do not altogether regret that the India Office has abstained from giving support to my effort, for I have thus been enabled to gratify a wish formed long ago, of dedicating a book to you. No man, in times past or present, has so brilliantly illustrated the cultured aspects of the Indian Civil Service as yourself. Long may you live, its *præsidium et dulce decus*!

The critics' opinion is summed up in the notice given to the Bengal Records by the *Economist*, which declared that their author had—

Again proved himself to be something more than a skilful compiler—the real scientific historian and economist of the modern school, capable of dealing with documents and fitted by clear insight and patient industry to drag their secrets from them.

Hunter repeated the general verdict of the press to one who is the acknowledged leader of the Bengal landed interest:—

<sup>1</sup> "Bengal MS. Records. A Selected List of 14,136 Letters in the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 1782-1807." London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1894.



TO RAJA PEARY MOHUN MUKHARJI.

September 12, 1894.

You will be pleased to hear that the work has been accepted as a complete and final answer to those who were anxious to destroy the Permanent Settlement. As the *Economist* says, "If the Settlement is hereafter tampered with, it must be not on historical or economic grounds, but on those of brutal expediency. But the latter will never prevail in Parliament, especially in our House of Lords, against the actual facts.

Newspaper opinion was reinforced by that of practical administrators, among whom the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal stood foremost:—

FROM SIR CHARLES ELLIOTT.

July 2, 1894.

I have read your introduction with much interest. Like everything else from your pen, it is written with charming lucidity, and sets forth the history of Lord Cornwallis' great measure in a manner which has never hitherto been attempted.

Amid the exhausting labours involved by such works as this Hunter entertained a constant succession of guests at Oaken Holt. Amongst them was Mr. A. K. Loyd, the Conservative candidate for the Abingdon Division. He was doubly welcome as the nephew of Lord Wantage and as one who had passed with distinction the ordeal for the Indian Civil Service; and Hunter's efforts contributed largely to his success at the general election of the following year. To an Oxford undergraduate who was meditating a political career he gave some sound advice:—

July 11, 1894.

I fear there is no pocket receipt for becoming a politician. I assume you have read, or will acquaint yourself with, the standard writers of constitutional history. Walter Bagehot's "British Constitution" and his "Lombard Street," Escott, Leslie Stephen, Lecky, Gardiner, Hallam must all be studied; also Macaulay and Froude, both of whom are undervalued by some of our young Oxford historians. The practical way to learn party politics is to get yourself appointed an unpaid private secretary to some M.P.—a Cabinet Minister, if you can catch one. Or (2) to become an unpaid official attached to the Central Association of your party, or to one of its provincial branches, or to a



local caucus. Or, again, (3) to attach yourself to some man who is nursing a constituency for the next election. Or (4) to cut in yourself and nurse a constituency on your own account. The Central Associations always have plenty of forlorn hopes to dispose of, but I think Nos. 1 and 2 the best methods of practically learning the business. I hope this short note may be what you want, and only regret that the pressure of other duties compels brevity.

My wife and I spent this summer in England, and thoroughly enjoyed two visits to Oaken Holt. The house was nearly finished, and though the somewhat garish tones of its red brick were as yet unmitigated by ivy and creepers, it was an excellent specimen of the homes of our squirearchy. The interior reminded one of Horace Walpole's exquisite epigram on a great London house of his day:—

Ut domus est dominus, non extra fulta columnis  
Marmoreis splendet; quod tenet intus habet.

The central hall with its billiard-table, the drawing-room, brightened by Aubusson tapestry, a painted ceiling and Louis XV. furniture; the library, containing a collection of works on India found in no other private house—all this, and much besides, was a fit setting for the master's personality. Our mornings were given up to wanderings in the delightful woods, the afternoons to exploring the remoter points of interest under the guidance of our host. The evening was dedicated to music, in which Hunter took the keenest delight; and the day ended with a symposium in the smoking-room enlivened by his marvellous flow of anecdote and humour. Never was he seen to greater advantage than at home; and it was quite touching to observe the respect with which he was greeted everywhere by his rustic neighbours. He described the routine to his son:—

TO CAMPBELL.

June 21, 1884.

We have had a houseful of people this week for the *Encœnia* and Commemoration—our cousins the Matthew Horans, the Skrines, Blurette Knox, and various dinner-parties, including one of sixteen for this evening. I go on with my day's work at the top of the house till luncheon, and let our friends play with each other the while in the Wytham woods. Then I drive out one phaeton full, while your mother has the victoria for the afternoon.



At the beginning of August the Hunters visited the Antwerp Exhibition and attended the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth. The incidents of the trip are told graphically in the diary:—

*3rd August.*—Antwerp. Examined the Indian Section and got together all the materials for a *Times* article, also the gallery of modern art, in which the English display was disgraceful. The Lord Mayor of London has come over in state with his gilt coach, household, and aldermen.

*4th August.*—Drove round Antwerp in the Lord Mayor's procession. Lunched civically in the "Old Antwerp" court, and banqueted at the Burgomaster's.

*9th August.*—At Weimar. Visited dear Mabel's grave, which stands against the west wall of the cemetery among many a *hier ruht in Gott*, overlooking a cultivated slope with all her favourite *feldwegs*, and bounded by the woods of the Belvidere, topped by its graceful cupola. We left a wreath, and had a three hours' carriage drive through all her old haunts.

#### TO CAMPBELL.

*August 12, 1894.*

The farther south we got in our journey from Weimar to Bayreuth, the greater seemed the work done by women and the amount of beer consumed by men. The fields were full of women labouring till dark, and at the station the patient creatures stood with baskets on their backs waiting for the passengers' luggage. At one place two stalwart Bavarians loaded a basket with their portmanteaus, lifted it on the back of a girl of twelve and marched gallantly in front of her to the neighbouring village.

*DIARY, 14th August.*—Bayreuth. This is an off-day. Met various artistes last night, and drove out eight of them to the Hermitage, finishing with a dinner. It was a chapter out of "Wilhelm Meister." Endless delays, alarms, and excursions at starting, and then a collapse from hunger after an hour's drive.

*20th August.*—Left Bayreuth after a wet, cold, and rainy week. This festival has been a unique experience in my life.

*25th August.*—Arrived at Oaken Holt last night to find 135 letters awaiting me. Attacked them and got through the most urgent.

A fortnight afterwards he concluded his editorial duties in the "Rulers of India Series" by preparing for the press Sir Auckland Colvin's memoir of his father, who was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces at the outbreak of



the Mutiny. He then set to work in earnest on the memoir of Mr. Brian Hodgson, by arranging all the materials and carefully perusing the earlier letters.

In September he began his career as a "City man" by accepting a Directorship of the Doonars Tea Company, presided over by his friend Mr. W. H. Verner. He afterwards joined the boards of two undertakings connected with it, and later those of the Southern Panjab Railway and the Baku Russian Petroleum Companies. His inherited business instincts, and the concentrated energy which he brought to bear on everything that came to his hand, made him a most efficient director. But the addition to his labours involved by the attendance at board meetings had its share in cutting short his days. One is tempted to regret that jealousy kept him out of the India Council, for he would have been a tower of strength to that body, and would have been spared the manifold anxieties entailed by a plunge into the City whirlpool. He was, doubtless, influenced in essaying it by the wish to gain wealth and influence for his children. The elder was serving with the Oxfordshire Light Infantry in Burma, and had an assured career. The second was still on the threshold of his chosen profession—that of civil engineer, and many were the plans formed by his father for giving him a successful start in life. In reply to a query from him as to the respective merits of State and private enterprise in the construction and management of railways he wrote:—

TO CAMPBELL.

October 8, 1894.

At one time I would have agreed with you that railway construction by companies was best for a country. It is more rapid, for competition accomplishes wide extensions in a short time. On the other hand, it is more costly than when the task is undertaken by the State, and under the latter system a country gets a more perfectly planned network at a smaller cost. The three points for you to consider are construction, working in ordinary times, and availability for the mobilisation of troops in war. Touching the first, I have said enough. As regards the second, the public is better served by a State system in point of cheapness of rates, immunity from accidents, and correspondence between trains, but worse served in point of civility, speed, and liberty of action enjoyed



by passengers. As to the availability for mobilising troops, the advantages are decidedly on the side of State construction and control.

The young man was about to quit Eton for the vexed waters of active life. He did so with the feelings so inimitably rendered in Gray's immortal ode. To those unprivileged to regard the "antique towers which crown the watery glade" with filial devotion, there is something enigmatic in the success attained by Etonians in every sphere. Sir Alfred Lyall put the case concisely when he wrote:—

*December 27, 1894.*

We were very glad to see something of your son while he was up for his examination. Eton, with its drains and floods, is a mirific place of education. I wonder whether it will flourish another 400 years, teaching little, but turning out good men, the Lord knows how.

The "Rulers of India Series" was now complete. When Englishmen have accomplished an arduous task they always place the topmost stone to the fabric by dining together. Hunter gratified the national instinct by organising a banquet at Oxford to celebrate the great event. The festivities were described to his son:—

TO CAMPBELL.

*January 31.*

On Saturday the "Rulers of India" poured into Oxford. Sir Owen and Lady Agnes Burne, Sir Lepel and Lady Griffin, and Sir Auckland Colvin,<sup>1</sup> came to us, while the rest of the authors were quartered on the Vice-Chancellor, the Warden of Merton, and the President of Trinity. In the evening the Vice-Chancellor (Dr. Magrath) entertained us at a banquet at Queen's, which was duly reported in *The Times*. On Sunday Mr. George Brodrick, Warden of Merton, gave the "Rulers" a lunch, and at night they all dined with us. On Monday they gradually took their departure for London, and on Tuesday I too had a busy day in the great city. To-morrow our Conservative candidate, Mr. A. K. Loyd, and his wife, come to us for a few days, and we launch on a sea of county politics.

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Owen Burne's contributions to the series was a *Life of Lords Clyde and Strathnairn*, Sir Lepel Griffin's, that of *Ranjit Singh*. Sir Auckland Colvin was the biographer of his father, Mr. John Russell Colvin.



At the close of February influenza again seized him in its ruthless grip.<sup>1</sup> For a fortnight he was confined to bed, struggling in vain against utter prostration to render the tale of journalistic work. But no physical weakness could subdue his love of books. During this illness he got through a mass of fiction, besides studying more solid works in preparation for his great "History of British India."<sup>2</sup> The return in March of his eldest son from service in Burma gave him strength to conquer the malady. He wrote:—

TO CAMPBELL.

March 17, 1895.

I still feel a worm, but I must send you a line to say that Willie arrived safe and sound last night. He is just his own bright self, scarcely changed, except for the increase of his moustache. I hope to be able to go for a short ride to-morrow with him, if the day is fine and I am able to sit in the saddle.

On the following Saturday he was well enough to accompany Lady Hunter and his elder son to Eton. The diary gives a delightful glimpse of life at a public school.

*24th March.*—Sunday. All three attended the school chapel with Campbell, and Jessie and I afterwards lunched with Dr. Warre, the headmaster. In the evening to St. George's Chapel. At 6.30 a great "sock" tea in Campbell's room—tongue, muffin, buttered eggs, plum-cake, blackberry jam, and potted salmon. We were waited on by zealous fags, to whom Campbell gave four muffins for their trouble.

On 9th May, Professor 'T. W. Rhys Davids announced to Hunter his election as Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society. No living man had done as much to promote the objects for which it had been founded, and the Society honoured itself in appointing him to this high office.

While living a strenuous life in the thick of affairs, he did not neglect the interests of the little community which looked

<sup>1</sup> Hunter was much amused by a remark made by the Vicar of Cumnor, on learning from him that influenza always attacked his head. "Yes," said his friend with a sigh, "it always goes to the weakest point!"

<sup>2</sup> The list included the "Old Curiosity Shop," "Pride and Prejudice," "A Prisoner of Zenda," "Round the Bonny Briar Bush," "The Rubicon," and many other novels, besides the first volume of "Mill's History of India," and Danvers' "Portuguese Records."



up to him as their head. He was Chairman of the Cumnor Parish Council until he was elected a member of the larger organisation for Berkshire. The local lodge of Oddfellows found in him an efficient chairman at the anniversary dinners, and he was always ready to give his time and money to promote the well-being of his rural neighbours. On an application from the Nonconformist minister at Cumnor for help towards building a chapel, he sent a handsome donation and added words of encouragement which were rated yet more highly:—

TO THE REV. BROOKES GREGORY.

*June 14, 1895.*

I wish you well in your good work and hope that all our fellow-parishioners, by whatever lines of religious thought divided, will never forget the binding links of our Christian brotherhood and the essential unity of our common faith.

On the following day, while riding with his soldier son, he was thrown from his horse, and his right arm was badly crushed. He made light of the injury, and presided, with his arm in a sling, at the Assam dinner, held on 2nd July, at the Holborn Restaurant. His address has peculiar significance at the present day. He warned the audience of a condition which still hampers the progress of the great tea industry—a tendency to over-produce, to pluck coarse and inferior leaf in utter disregard of market needs. He urged co-operation and a resolute attempt to increase the sphere of consumption. The future of our planters in Assam and Upper India depends on the manner in which they face the inexorable workings of the law of supply and demand.

The Doctor recommended change of air and rest as anodynes for the acute pain arising from the injury. On 4th July, therefore, Hunter started from the London Docks for Cork and Killarney. Glengariff, styled the Madeira of Ireland, was his first halting-place, and he described its many beauties with an enthusiasm tempered by the discomfort which is too common on Irish tours:—

TO LADY HUNTER.

*July 10, 1895.*

To-day the pain has suddenly left my shoulder, and I feel able to write, so my first letter is to you. Then I shall sit down quietly



and do an article for *The Times*, if my hand will hold out long enough to finish it.

My hotel is just on the shore, and would be perfect but for the noisy, rough waiters and the dirty chambermaids, whom one has to call by standing in the passage in one's pyjamas and shouting, because the bedroom bells make no pretence to be in working order. The dragged creatures at Cork struck me most painfully. We laugh at the mill-girls of the East End of London, with highly coloured ostrich feathers in their Sunday hats. But that is better than idling around without any head-dress at all, and the hair hanging down in tangled masses, as the poorest women do at Cork. After all, a blue, or even magenta ostrich feather is a sign of self-respect. The same class here seem to give up the idea of making themselves pleasing to any mortal being.

We are apt to take the working of the mechanism of human industry for granted, as we regard the movements of the heavenly bodies. There are few, indeed, who realise the ingenuity brought to bear on the operations of our ocean telegraph cables. Hunter visited the terminus of three connecting the old and new worlds at Waterville, near Valentia Harbour, and described the marvels shown him to his son, who had commenced his training as a civil engineer.

TO CAMPBELL.

July 12, 1895.

At Waterville, on the south-western coast of Ireland, I came upon a regular telegraph colony of fifty-four officials with wives and belongings. The three cables discharge their messages continuously, day and night, upon reels of paper-tape which are unrolled and printed off in the telegraphic alphabet automatically. One man transcribes the words as they appear on the tape, while another looks over his shoulder and sees that he makes no mistake. The huge rolls, as they are exhausted, are stored in pigeon-holes for a year, in case of reference. This was but one of the many wonders shown me. The machines work with the intelligence of human beings, but without the possibility of human error.

On reaching Liverpool he hurried south, in order to vote for Mr. Loyd, who was contesting Abingdon at the general election. The splendid majority secured by his friend was in great measure due to his exertions. They were warmly acknowledged by the champion of the winning side:—



From LORD WANTAGE.

July 20, 1895.

I have been able to tell Lord George Hamilton how much the Conservative cause is indebted to you in North Berkshire. Without such help as you are giving we should have been far from converting a minority into a majority.

Another successful candidate<sup>1</sup> wrote at the same time in answer to Hunter's message of congratulation :—

From MR. M. N. BHOWNUGGREE.

July 20, 1895.

It has been a hard fight—harder than any one who did not see it will ever realise. I remember with gratitude the support and encouragement you have given me from the first.

These exertions were undergone in spite of unceasing pain. A careful examination by Dr. Brooks of Oxford revealed its source. The little finger of the right hand was dislocated, the main nerve of the arm severely bruised, and the top of a bone splintered. The hand was of course confined to splints and writing became impossible. But the incapacity did not prevent Hunter from revising the "Old Missionary," which had delighted the readers of the *Contemporary Review* on its first appearance in 1893. "Being unable to write," he told Campbell :—

I have carried out your mother's long-cherished wish, and during the last three weeks have revised the proofs for a cheap edition of "The Old Missionary." It will take the wind out of the pirates' sails in America; but the designing of the exterior and the whole typographical form of a "pretty" book falls on the poor author in this inartistic land.

The final proofsheets were passed during a second excursion to Glengariff, undertaken in September with Lady Hunter. The little idyll was published by Mr. Frowde immediately after the author's return, and gave pleasure to thousands of readers. Among the many tributes which it evoked is one from a brother author :—

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<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Muncherjee M. Bhownaggree, K.C.I.E., a Bombay Parsi, who represents North-East Bethnal Green on the Conservative benches.



FROM SIR HENRY CUNNINGHAM.

September 23, 1895.

Your book is really charming and full of pathos. I regard it as a literary feat of which even you may be proud to have thrown a halo of romance over the Athanasian Creed. It is the first good that I have ever heard of it!

The reference to the Confession of Faith attributed, on the slightest of grounds, to an Alexandrian Patriarch of the third century, occurs at page 105 of the 1895 edition.

"So long as I live," replied the Old Missionary slowly and with a solemn emphasis on every word, "the Church in which I have preached Christ's message of mercy shall never be profaned by man's dogma of damnation."

There are many faithful sons of the Church of England who share the author's aversion for the intolerance and hair-splitting displayed in the Athanasian Creed.

His earnest desire to promote India's best interests led him to raise his voice in *The Times* on behalf of those who had left their over-peopled country to seek pastures new across the sea. We have heard a good deal of wrongs endured by white Uitlanders at the head of the defunct South African Republics, but the tyranny of Mr. Kruger and his myrmidons was shown more unblushingly towards the hapless Indian traders who ventured across the Vaal River. Hunter's efforts on behalf of the intruders whose sole crime was that of colour, secured their heartfelt gratitude. In a reply to a quaintly worded memorial from his *protégés* he wrote:—

TO MR. M. V. GANDHI.

September 11, 1895.

I feel it my duty, on all occasions and in all suitable ways, to insist that Indians should enjoy the full status of British subjects throughout the Empire and its allied States. This is the position which our Indian friends in South Africa should firmly take up. Any compromise would involve a relinquishment of the fundamental rights earned by their loyalty in times of peace and their services in war—a right which was solemnly guaranteed to them by the Queen's Proclamation in 1857.



True to these noble sentiments, he did not hold his hand until Mr. Chamberlain had intervened to secure promises of fair treatment from the Transvaal Government.<sup>1</sup>

He was ever ready to assist those who were inspired by similar aims. Amongst his fellow-workers was the late Sir Henry Acland of Oxford, who believed a knowledge of medicine to be an essential part of a missionary's equipment. They both agreed that Mr. Gladstone's name would carry immense weight, and Hunter suggested that Sir Henry might induce him to write a review on medical missions. The reply was not encouraging:—

FROM SIR HENRY ACLAND.

*October 29, 1895.*

Your kindness in so patiently helping me to-day will be always remembered. But I write without losing a post to tell you that on reflection I think it will be useless to address Mr. Gladstone. He hardly reads letters, and Mrs. Gladstone is too unwell to help him in this, or I might write to her. But he is deeply engaged in finishing a considerable work of research and thought on Bishop Butler's "Analogy," and nothing new will divert him. Practically I feel sure he will not write on the Indian question. But after we have met again I will write and see what he says. A lady doctor from Basuto Land told me that a medicine-man who is also ordained occupies a much more important position than a priest.

Hunter yielded to no man in appreciation of humour, but his deep sympathy with the peoples of India led him to resent any attempt to make them the subject of ridicule. The English-speaking world was convulsed a generation back by the grotesque diction of a Bengali's "Life of Mr. Justice Onocool Chunder Mookerjee," and it assumed that the biographer was a fair sample of the products of our higher education. Nothing is more at variance with the facts than this notion, for thousands of Indians speak and write as pure and nervous English as their masters. But the general impression still finds utterance, and at the close of 1895 the

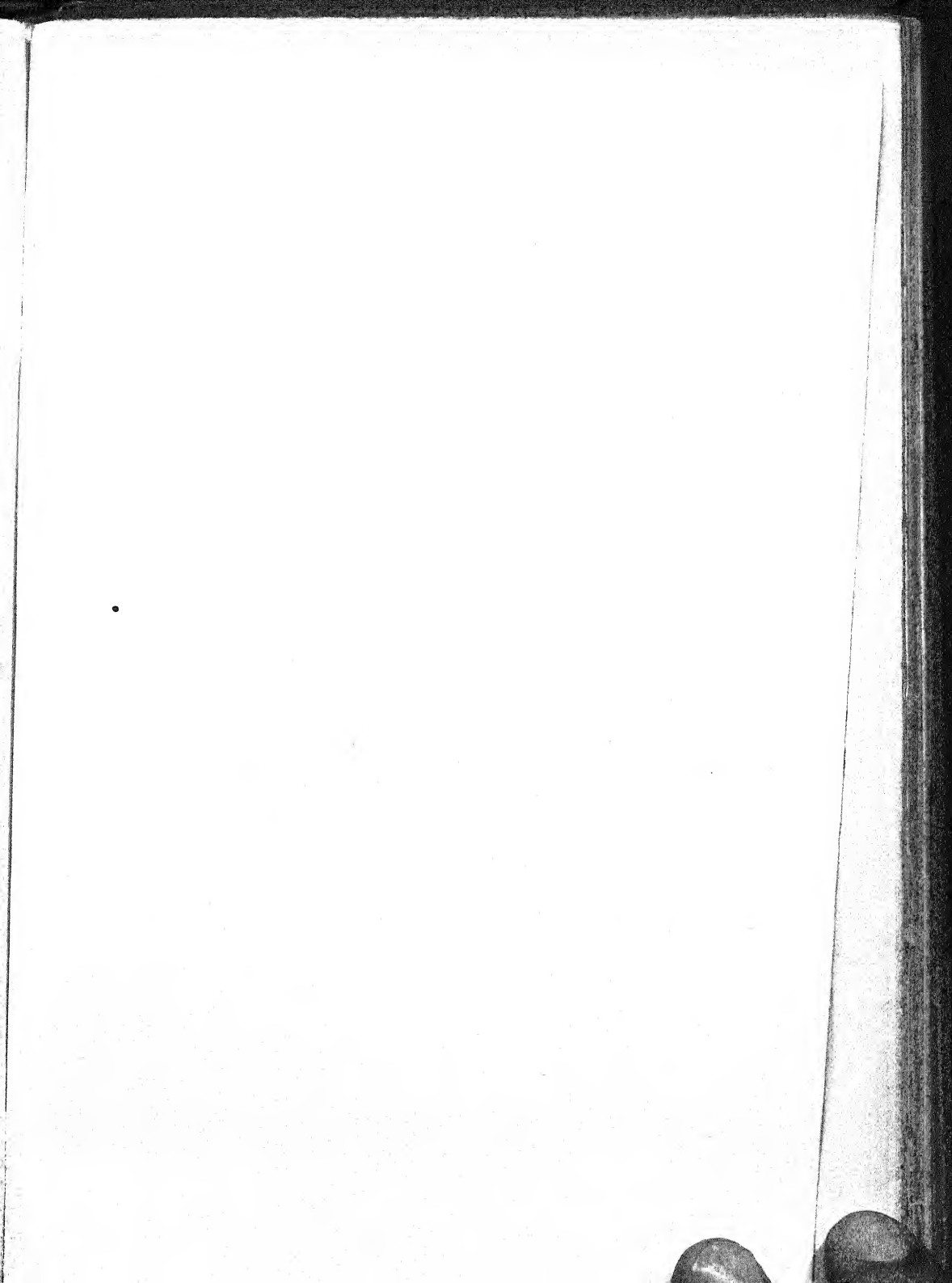
<sup>1</sup> In March 1896 he returned to the charge, urging Mr. Chamberlain to include the status of British immigrants into the Transvaal among the subjects of discussion during President Kruger's visit to this country. In the following year he had an interview with the Secretary of State for India regarding their wrongs.



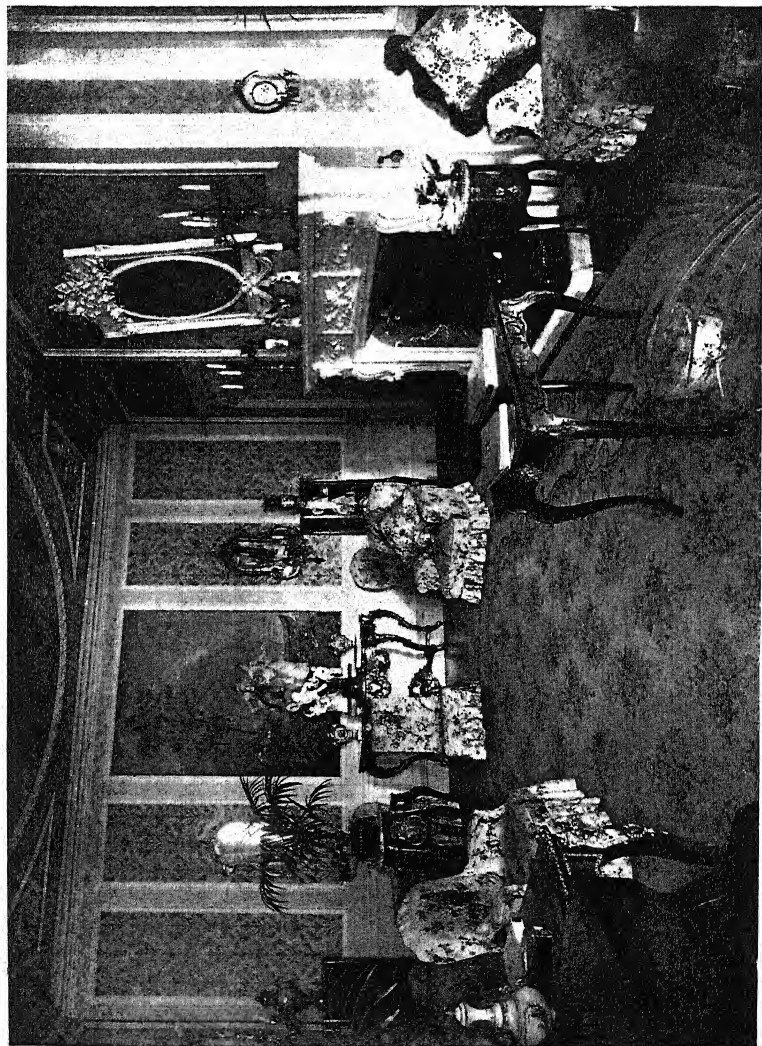
readers of *Punch* were delighted with some clever specimens of "Babuese." Hunter took up the cudgels for a much maligned class when he wrote:—

It is the pride of Englishmen that the wit of *Punch* is not cruel, that his mirth gives no pain, and that his satire spares the weak. I feel sure that you cannot know that the letter in your last issue signed "Hurry Bungsho Jabberjee, B.A.," will be regarded as a cowardly affront by thousands of good subjects of the Queen, who are defenceless under its ridicule. As a late Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, let me give you my word that the Bengali B.A. is not the poor creature whom your clever writer holds up to laughter. But even if the caricature were a fair one, it is unworthy of *Punch*, for it will wound the feelings of a large class of meritorious men who have no opportunity to hit back.









*Photograph*

DRAWING-ROOM, OAKEN HOLT



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE THACKERAYS IN INDIA

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, whose works are the high water-mark of Victorian fiction, had no more fervent admirer than Hunter. He was the son and grandson of Bengal civilians, and though he quitted India in early childhood, his novels are full of the unmistakable aroma of the East. Much of his inspiration was, indeed, drawn from Indian officers, just as *Sterne's* masterpiece was woven on a framework supplied by those lieutenants of Marlborough who fought and blasphemed so lustily in Flanders. For Hunter, his idol's untimely death was a real bereavement, and an exquisite statuette by Boehm representing him to the life was the chief ornament of his writing-table. In 1886, while inditing two essays on "Some Old Calcutta Graves," he lingered fondly on the tomb of the novelist's father. A few years later his duties as editor of the "Rulers of India" brought him into contact with the great man's daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, who wrote a *Life of Lord Amherst* in collaboration with Mr. Richardson Evans. It was probably the light thrown by her conversation on the career of his favourite author that led him to enlarge these sketches into the story of the Indian Thackerays. Through her, too, he had access to a privately printed record of the family, which, though chaotic in its arrangement, has some charming pictures of still life in the eighteenth century. But these materials were far from satisfying his passion for exactness. He read assiduously at the Bodleian Library, and corresponded with every kinsman of his hero who could help him to understand the influences that moulded his genius. On 27th January he was able to report substantial progress to his younger son :—



## TO CAMPBELL.

*January 27, 1896.*

Last week I finished Hodgson's Life and made over the manuscript to his widow. It will be published by John Murray. Now I am in full swing with a book of a more interesting character, "The Thackerays in India." This will chime in well with my researches for the "History of India," as indeed did Hodgson's memoir. I hope to begin the actual writing for the great history in June, and to bring out the first volume early in 1898. The preliminary work is enormous, as I have to dig everything out of the official records. However, the greater the labour the better discipline for myself, and the more lasting the results for the world.

While delving for materials in the great Oxford library, he lighted upon a set of documents relating to a religious movement there which had entirely passed out of the public memory. They proved that, as far back as 1681, Bishop Fell had raised a handsome subscription towards the cost of spreading the Christian faith in India, and had actually induced the East India Company to head the list. This discovery antedates the origin of British missions by a quarter of a century, and places the Company in a light differing strangely from that which its hostility to Christian propaganda threw upon it in later years. On this obscure subject he sought inspiration from Dr. R. Needham Cust, whose services to the missionary cause are well known, and obtained the following reply:—

*March 3, 1896.*

I doubt whether the East India Company, when they really commenced their career of conquest and annexation, ever intentionally opposed missionaries. The fact is that they were not sure of their ground. They had to do with strange and powerful religious bodies, they did not care a straw for religion themselves, and they wanted to keep things quiet. History told them that a religious outcry was a dangerous thing, as we found it in the Mutinies. So they forbade all elements of confusion and tumult to enter their territories, and kept missionaries out. Russia, Austria, and France in their colonies and dependencies follow the same policy to this day. In a chapter of my book on "Missions," now in the press,<sup>1</sup> headed "The exclusion of missionaries from certain countries under certain circumstances justifiable and necessary," I point out that the time may be near at hand when even the Government of India may be obliged to exclude firebrands

<sup>1</sup> "The Gospel Message," published in 1896.



who attack liquor, opium, early marriage, and the sanitary arrangements in cantonments of European soldiers. In Turkey and China all possibility of decent civil government is destroyed by the missionaries.

After collating these curious relics with documents in the India Office Library, Hunter told the story of the episode in the April number of the *Fortnightly Review*. "A Forgotten Oxford Movement" made a great stir, as the present Bishop of Oxford had predicted it would.<sup>1</sup>

So large was the sale of "The Old Missionary" that the author was induced to reproduce it in more elaborate garb. But those who buy comparatively expensive editions require illustrations of high artistic merit, and these are not easy of attainment in an age when engravings have been practically ousted by soulless mechanical processes. Through Sir Charles Lawson, a well-known journalist of the Madras Presidency, he was introduced to the late General Sir Charles D'Oyley, who belonged to a family in which the artist's instincts are hereditary. Of him Sir Charles Lawson wrote:—

March 23, 1896.

D'Oyley is a born artist, as you are a born writer; and the sympathy between you should resemble that which united "Boz" and "Phiz." By the way, the latter was connected with India through his brother, General Charles A. Browne, who was for many years Secretary to the Government of Madras.

The General responded with alacrity to Hunter's overtures, and "The Old Missionary" appeared at the close of the year with five illustrations which sustained the dignity and pathos of the text.

In April 1896 the cause of education in India sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Mr. Chester Macnaghten, who had governed the Rajkot College for the sons of chieftains in Kathiawar with conspicuous success. His system was that of the ancient Greeks—a harmonious intellectual and physical training. How fortunate the young nobles were in their friend and teacher may be gathered from the reply of Sir James Peile to a request made by Hunter for facts to serve for an obituary notice in *The Times*:—

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Dr. Francis Paget, Dean of Christ Church, dated 26th April 1896.



FROM SIR JAMES PEILE.

*April 29, 1896.*

I selected Chester Macnaghten for the Raj Kumar College at Rajkot in 1870. Most of the chiefs looked askance at the institution, but Macnaghten's tact and conciliatory manner told from the first. When, however, pupils began to come in, they were each attended by a tail of retainers, armed to the teeth, who mounted guard outside the young master's room lest he should be murdered by the scion of a rival house. It took a very long time to reduce these retinues to one or two attendants for each. The college was enlarged from time to time till it formed a fairly perfect "quad," in which every student has his rooms as at Oxford or Cambridge. When they became more amenable, Macnaghten put them into uniform and drilled them as troopers; and he went forth with this cavalry to meet and escort the Political Agent<sup>1</sup> on his arrival at Rajkot. Athletics were his special care. The boys soon picked up the slang of the cricket-field; one heard loud shouts from the playground—"Run it out, sir, run it out; ah, butter-fingers! &c." The result of this training is seen in a contrast between the chief of to-day and his ancestor of 1850, which is really astonishing. I knew many of the old men. Some of them were shattered by opium; others were fine dignified fellows, but unlettered, narrow, and disposed to hold aloof from us except on ceremonial occasions. Their administration was old-fashioned, and not very just; public works there were none, schools very few. Now you may pick out a dozen bright, intelligent young rulers of various characters, but all impressed with a sense of their responsibilities. There are railways and roads, hospitals and schools all over Kathiawar. Much, of course, has been done by the Bombay Government and the Politicals, but the change in the personality of the men with whom we have to deal is due chiefly to Chester Macnaghten and his college. You probably know Sir Bhagwatsing of Gondal, who is devoted to medical science and often in England. Sir Jaswatsing of Limri is a gentle, cultured youth. Another old pupil is Kumar Ranjitsingji, the famous cricketer; and, best of all and most regretted, was poor Sir Takhtsing of Bhawnagar. I was sitting beside him in the train which was taking him to Cambridge to receive the LL.D. degree, and as he looked out at the villages, each with its little spire, he said, thoughtfully, "That's what I like to see. Every village has its temple raised to God." In Bhawnagar one of the railway officials, an Englishman, was very ill, The Maharaja visited him and sat at his bedside; and as he was

<sup>1</sup> Every native chief has an official mentor in the person of a Political Agent, who represents the Viceroy at his court. Sir James Peile was Political Agent at Rajkot, the administrative centre for all the petty states of Kathiawar, in 1873 and again in 1875-78.



going away said, "Do you read your Bible, Mr. —? I hope you do." You may well suppose that results of this kind were not achieved by simple teaching in school hours, though the course of study was admirably planned. Macnaghten had the boys constantly about him, in and out of the house, and he made the character of each a spiritual study.

The world heard little of Chester Macnaghten during his life, but there are few Englishmen who have done so much as he to lessen the gulf between the ruling and the subject races in Western India. He rests from his labours and his works do follow him.

The Thakur of Gondal, alluded to in Sir James Peile's letter, was among Hunter's closest friends, and was a frequent guest at Oaken Holt during his visits to England. In July of this year he arrived at Oxford, with the Maharani, to attend the inauguration of the Indian Institute, which owed its being, in great measure, to his host's strenuous support. Sir Mountstuart and Lady Grant-Duff were fellow-guests; and Hunter's diary relates:—

*2nd July.*—Sir Mountstuart told me that the greatest merchant in England is Mr. Stephen Ralli, a Greek, and that the greatest financiers in the movement of the world's produce are Germans: (1) Klindwerth, (2) Schroeder (orchids), (3) Huth, a great book-collector, and (4) Goschen.

Another friend, destined soon to join the great majority, wrote touchingly to excuse his inability from ill-health to obey a hospitable summons to Oaken Holt.

FROM COLONEL G. B. MALLESON.

*May 28, 1896.*

It is possible, I am told, that I may get well again, but the knock at the door bids one prepare for the journey which every one of us, sooner or later, must take. I frankly tell you I would rather defer it, for I feel there is so much I could do if I were to stay. I should dearly like, too, to see more of that kind friend who has ever been true to me, who has done me so many good offices, whose marvellous career started, I remember well, with that work on Bengal which electrified the world the same year that I wrote my "French in India;" who with a deliberation which betokened the great mind, thought out the career he would follow, and, adhering to the well-thought-out plan, followed it step by step till he stood victorious on the summit his great abilities had stormed.



Yes, my friend, you conquered the impossible, despite rivalry, secret opposition and jealousies surging around you. No one recognised your genius more than I did; and I recollect well how generously you always used your victory, and how you have helped me on. I cannot believe that I shall go away from life without having wrung your hand and told you how much I have ever valued your friendship.

Hunter relinquished his intention of taking an autumn holiday this year, for the sake of his engineer son, who was studying his profession at Gotha. He wrote:—

TO CAMPBELL.

June 29, 1896.

I begin to weary for you to come home. So, while I put no limits to your touring in Germany, after saying good-bye to Gotha, I hope you will remember that the sooner we see you the happier we shall be. As you think that you would prefer making Oaken Holt your headquarters, we have given up the idea of going anywhere this autumn. I have got a splendid horse for you to-day. The stranger rejoices in the name of "Caul-Dhu," and was the late Bishop of Carlisle's favourite steed. He is as handsome as my cob "Comet," with more staying power. I propose, if you agree, that we should make little riding tours and explore the Berkshire Downs more fully than we have done. Your mother might meet us at various points, and I think we should have a good time of it.

This abandonment of his yearly outing enabled Hunter to continue his work without intermission. The greatest of his enterprises is thus referred to:—

TO MR. B. M. MALABARI.

June 22, 1896.

You ask me for some account of my projected "History of British India." It will present for the first time the annals of that country from the facts contained in manuscript records and materials collected by me in every province of the Empire. I had hoped to issue the first volume before this, but almost all the data gathered during twenty-three years went down in the *Nepal* in 1890, and I have only now been able to start the writing anew. It will make about five volumes, and will, I hope, do for the past of India what the "Imperial Gazetteer" has done for the present condition of that country. If I live I will endeavour to render it the most important work in our literature of the close of this century.

In the meantime the minor fruits of Hunter's incessant industry made their appearance in rapid succession. In October



the illustrated edition of "The Old Missionary" was published by Mr. Frowde. It was thus welcomed by Dr. Needham Cust:—

*October 25, 1896.*

Pray accept my best thanks for your beautiful book, but I do not admire it more in its new form than I did in its old simple appearance. Rarely have I met a work which has so entirely conquered the critics. I have found it in such surprising corners of the world, and noticed in so many periodicals.

The more solid memoir of Brian Hodgson saw the light on 12th November.<sup>1</sup> It was inscribed to the widow of his old friend, and never was a dedication better deserved. "In writing the book," he told her—

I have had to consider not only your great tenderness towards him, but also how I could best make him a reality to those who knew him not, and his memory a living possession to the world.

These ideals were realised in Hodgson's biography. The career of a diplomat and scholar was rescued from the oblivion brought by his prolonged retreat from active life. We see him plunged at an early age in the troubled waters of Nepalese politics, and preserving British prestige and his own existence by calm strength shown at a moment of the gravest peril. Then his many-sided activity in the realms of philological research and natural history is displayed, and the curtain falls with a charming description of the evening of his days spent in cultured retirement. "The Thackerays in India" was held back for a couple of months, lest it should interfere with the interest excited by the life-story of Brian Hodgson. The proof-sheets were submitted to Mrs. Richmond Ritchie on 2nd November, and in seeking permission to dedicate the work to her, the author expressed a hope that it contained nothing calculated to give a moment's pain to any one who bore the honoured name of Thackeray. She replied:—

*November 6, 1896.*

I find it difficult to tell you how much I like your vivid notes. They remind one of Macaulay's Essays, but are even more interesting. . . . There are various reasons why I don't want the book

<sup>1</sup> "A Life of Brian Broughton Hodgson." London: John Murray, 1896.



dedicated to me, but I am quite prepared to dedicate myself to it, and to give it to my various descendants and young people as an example of what a story ought to be in life and how it should be told.

There is something infinitely pathetic in the devotion with which poor, fleeting humanity cherishes the memory of the mighty dead. It is an unconscious assertion of our immortality, a mute protest against the oblivion that is the lot of all. The feats of Alexander are still told with bated breath in the Turkoman nomad's tent, and Napoleon's shade seems to loom the vaster over Europe as his personality recedes in the vista of years. So, in the great Vienna cemetery we wander listlessly over acres tenanted by the forgotten dead, when lo! the great names of Glück, Mozart, Beethoven, engraved on stone, stand out as the Alps above the Italian plain; and we lift up our heart in thankfulness to Him who has deigned to endow our fellow-creatures with a portion of His own creative power. Such are the thoughts which the magic word "Thackeray" suggests to him who paces the thick-set avenues of tombs in the Calcutta necropolis, and sees it among—

The long procession of well-known Indian names, some of them ennobled by heroic deeds, some mutely protesting against unmerited obloquy; not a few tarnished by greed and crime, but all pleading the pardon that is earned by death.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that this late flower of Hunter's constructive skill took its origin in some sketches of old Calcutta graves, written during the last year of his sojourn in India, and that they were expanded into a study of the hereditary influences which shaped the novelist's character. He who seeks to grasp the essentials of his genius and the mainsprings of the immortal creations to which it gave birth must read "The Thackerays in India." Accustomed as the author was to tokens of the pleasure and profit which his friends—and not they alone—derived from his works, he must have been affected by the feeling evoked by this little work. The American Ambassador replied to a letter accompanying a presentation copy:—

<sup>1</sup> "The Thackerays in India" and "Some Old Calcutta Graves." London: Henry Frowde, 1897, p. 10.



From the HON. J. F. BAYARD.

*January 16, 1897.*

I am much gratified to have from your own hand the reminiscences of the Thackerays in India, for *that* was part of his life but little known to me, and only now and then suggested by a faint reference in his writings. And I am glad to know from you that he was pleased with my country when he made his lecturing visit there.<sup>1</sup> There I saw him and heard him read, and once met him with a chance of conversation, which was cut short by an intrusive person, greatly to my sorrow. Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, was his host in that city, and from him I heard a good many little but characteristic things. Since I came here Mrs. Ritchie gave me a sketch, and Sir Henry Thompson a cast of Thackeray's hand, quite beautiful and expressive. Thus you will see your book has not fallen upon ground altogether unprepared for such seed, and again I thank you very much for it.

Hunter paid a similar compliment to Mr. Rudyard Kipling:—

*January 13, 1897.*

You were kind enough, many years ago, to take an interest in certain little essays of mine on "Some Calcutta Graves." Long before then, and ever since, I have watched with pride and admiration the genius by which you have changed India from a political expression into a literary treasure for all Englishmen of our time. I now ask your acceptance of a small book that incorporates the "Calcutta Graves," with other materials which furnish the background for the life of the great master of our craft.

Mr. Kipling replied:—

*January 15, 1897.*

It is curious, on looking back, to think how your essays, "Some Calcutta Graves," sent first myself and then my sister, Mrs. Fleming, over the same ground. There is a marvellous fascination in that Park Street cemetery, where all the used-up machinery of the Empire is put away. And it comes out under your hand. I read the book through as soon as it came out; and once again, as many times before, I have sinfully envied you your pen. Do you remember how, in 1888, there came out in the *Academy* a review of a small book of verse called "Departmental Ditties," a long two-column review of kindness and charity that mightily encouraged me? I have a long memory, and I have not forgotten. It was the first English review that ever came to me.

<sup>1</sup> Hunter told His Excellency that "No episode in Thackeray's life was to him a source of happier recollections than the hospitality which he received from your nation" (Letter of 13th January 1897).



The acknowledgment of the editor of the *Spectator* contains some curious facts touching the fortune made in India by the Thackerays and other shakers of the pagoda-tree:—

From MR. MEREDITH TOWNSEND.

January 15, 1897.

I have read your book. It is a very striking one, though the multiplicity of the men mentioned will a little bewilder readers who are not Anglo-Indians. Could you not publish in some magazine a few facts about the Nabobs? You could, I am sure, collect actual facts where I have only impressions. I doubt if anybody in India ever made a million, though if Clive had lived his fortune would have been worth that. Barwell brought home £900,000, and Rumbold—the original of Disraeli's vitriolic sketch in "Sybil"—may have accumulated as much. But the majority ended with less than £200,000. The idea of their monstrous wealth was founded, first on the low price of land which Arkwright and the great war made valuable, and next on the fact that you could still get eight per cent. for money. I want, too, to see the method of the "private trading" explained. You speak of it as if it were creditable to Thackeray. My impression is, that both Moore and he made their money by selling their monopoly rights to natives who nearly ruined Bengal. More has been made in South Africa in ten years than in India since Plassey.

Mr. David Carmichael, a retired Indian civilian whose uncle married Thackeray's mother, gave some deeply interesting reminiscences of the great man:—

February 18, 1897.

When I was a boy at Harrow, one Saturday afternoon there came strolling up the hill from the station a group of the queerest-looking tourists I ever saw; amongst them appeared the tall form of W. M. T. "Hulloa, David, my boy, glad to meet you; you can show us all round the place." "To be sure," I said; then presently whispering, "Who are your friends?" I learned that this was *Punch's* staff. "We go out into the suburbs every Saturday and discuss the jokes and the politics that shall appear next week." He then pointed out Douglas Jerrold, Leach, a very handsome fellow, who was at the Charterhouse with Thackeray, and others, mostly of the Bohemian type. We went into the churchyard. "This 'ere is Dr. Thackeray's tomb," said the sexton; "I am repairing of it now; I don't know who has ordered it—a gentleman in London, I am told." From the blush that came to Thackeray's face as he turned his head away, I was sure *he* was the gentleman. As the tourists went into the King's Head for their dinner,



Thackeray insisted on tipping me a sovereign, though I assured him I didn't want it. He often chaffed me about this. "Yes, so you said, young fellow, but you took it all the same, and I had only five in the world in those days!"

"Thackeray's beautiful mother." She certainly was so. Once at a small evening party in Paris—say fifty years ago—dancing was suddenly commenced. "Come, mother," said Thackeray, "let me waltz with you!" When the Frenchmen present learned that the white-haired man was the son of the handsome lady of middle age whom he held round the waist, many a "Est-il possible?" went up, I assure you.

*The original of Colonel Newcome.*—Mrs. Ritchie claims this honour for her grandmother's husband. Where he lies buried she has put up a tablet with the *Adsum* quotation. I have W. M. T.'s own declaration that he took the character from both my uncles, the Major and the General. "I know," I said, "whom you had in your mind." "To be sure you would," was the reply; "but you see I *angelicised* the old boys a little!"

The recurrence of famine in Upper and Central India was the inevitable skeleton of the Jubilee Banquet of 1897. Hunter had pointed out, long years before, the cause of these calamities, and the events of 1897-99 served but to accentuate his warnings of the natural result of over-population. Any well-considered scheme which aimed at lessening the burden laid on an over-tasked soil was sure to gain his active support. Thus he gave much time and pains to the one elaborated by Mr. H. D. Tucker, of the Salvation Army, which sought a solution of the problem in forming agricultural colonies on the vast unoccupied area that fringes the congested districts. He corresponded regularly, too, with those who were engaged in struggling with famine. Chief amongst this devoted band was Sir Antony MacDonnell, who kept Hunter posted in every measure taken by him to relieve helpless distress and employ those who were able to work. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces was struck by the recuperative power shown by the people, but another view was taken by the Prime Minister of Mysore.

FROM SIR K. SHESHADRI AYYAR.

July 21, 1897.

The old theory that it takes several seasons to make a famine is no longer true. The people are everywhere less patient than they used to be a generation ago, and they now expect the Govern-



ment to do a great deal more in the way of relief than they did on previous occasions when famine threatened.

His practical experience enabled Hunter to speak with authority in *The Times* on behalf of the suffering myriads, and he did yet more for them when, in response to an invitation from a committee, headed by Vice-Chancellor Magrath, he put forth a glowing appeal to the people of Oxfordshire:—

Every shilling that you give will keep a poor widow or an orphan for a week; every sovereign may save some bereaved family from being broken up; every hundred pounds will enable a whole village which has lost its plough, cattle, and seed-grain, to make a fresh start. If you can subscribe a hundred pounds, give them. If you have a sovereign or half a sovereign, give it. If you can spare only a shilling, give it in Heaven's name, for no offering earns a surer blessing than the charity of the working-man to the poor.

Well might Sir George Birdwood style this manifesto "the best and noblest thing you ever did."<sup>1</sup> It is pleasant to add that the response made by Oxfordshire and its capital added materially to the Famine Relief Fund.

In May 1897 the family travelled to County Down to attend the marriage of their eldest son and Miss Marion Robinson, daughter of the late Warden of Trinity College, Glenalmond. They spent the night of the 13th at Ballywater Park, the seat of Lord Dunleath; and on the morrow drove seventeen miles to Ballyculter church, where the ceremony took place. The deep affection inspired by the bride in her neighbours of all degrees was shown by the demeanour of the crowded congregation, which included the Catholic priest and many of his flock.

Soon after the Hunters' return, they entertained Mr. Rudyard Kipling at Oaken Holt. The diary for 23rd May relates:—

A long ramble with R. K. in the oak and hawthorn groves of Wytham. In the afternoon we had a shoal of visitors. Kipling and Sir Charles Elliott dined with me at seven at the Balliol high table, and the former received an ovation from the youth below. Then a special concert (Bach) in his honour in Balliol Hall.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 20th February 1897.



The poet-novelist echoed the feeling of all who were privileged to enjoy the hospitality of Oaken Holt when he wrote on reaching his home at Rottingdean: "And so I'm come back to earth again, the richer for the rest of my life by those three wonderful days with you."

Hunter was introduced by his distinguished guest to Mr. A. P. Watt, the well-known literary agent, through whose diplomacy he was able to conclude satisfactory arrangements for the publication of his "*History of British India*." The great house of Longman became its sponsors, and the task of printing began forthwith. It remained to find an assistant equal to the task of pursuing parallel branches of research to those which the author reserved for his own treatment, and supplying him with trustworthy data. Here Hunter's unerring penetration again stood him in good stead. He made the acquaintance of Mr. P. E. Roberts, of Worcester College, who had already won his spurs as a historian. The young student was appointed his secretary, and after serving him with devotion was able to complete the second volume when its contriver's brain was stilled by death.

In June this year I returned to England for good, having resigned the Indian Civil Service in protest against treatment which I considered unjust and ungenerous. The first visitor, on our arrival in London, was Hunter, and he stayed with us twice at Queen Anne's Mansions, entertaining us as often at his beautiful home. Many were the consultations as to my future, and his advice was as conspicuous for worldly knowledge as for kindness of heart. I wrote down some of his maxims at the time—would that I had done as much for his conversation generally!

There is no greater bore than a man with a grievance. Try to forget yours, or at least be careful never to obtrude it.

Always ask for what you want on your first return from a long stay abroad. You will find people then more disposed to be kind to you than later on.

In England patience is even more essential to success than brains. In an old country, with strong caste and conservative instincts, you can't expect to leap into fame in a day. No, whatever you may do or strive to do, you will long remain an "unknown man." I heard a novelist, whose books command a thousand



pounds apiece, say the other day that his history for seven long years might be summed up in "returned with thanks."

Many able men fail here because they "ride jealous," as the jockeys say. In a complex society such as ours, we are all linked by unseen bonds, and you cannot help yourself without helping others too. Every one has his own ambitions. Before asking a favour, then, find out what the man from whom you seek it wants for himself, and try to further his ends in some way. This is not altruism so much as "enlightened self-interest," the quality with which we Scotchmen are generally credited, and which is, in truth, the secret of our success.

To a man embarking on English literature I would say, "Don't neglect your general culture, but strive to master some particular subject thoroughly, however small it may be." You will thus in time be recognised as a specialist, and plant your foot firmly on the first rung of the upward ladder. It is extraordinary how suddenly a position is sometimes gained. You eat your heart out for years in obscurity, and then, without apparent cause, you find yourself looked up to as an authority.

At Hunter's advice I undertook a journey to Samarkand in the winter of 1897, to study the politics of Russian Turkestan and the Central Asian Khanates. Its fruit was a work, written in collaboration with Professor E. Denison-Ross, which attempted to continue the story told ten years before by Lord Curzon's "Russia in Central Asia."<sup>1</sup>

There are many who believe that 1897 marked the apogee of the British Empire. Indeed the most sluggish heart was stirred by the Diamond Jubilee, which made it a happier *annus mirabilis* in our history. On Hunter the rejoicings had a profound impression. He witnessed the sovereign's triumphal march through London. He attended the gala performance at the opera, which recalled Napoleon's "parterre of kings" at the Erfurt theatre, and traversed the city of war ships at Spithead. But, while the outward and visible signs of an Empire's might kindled his enthusiasm, the pathetic side of the pageant was not lost on him. Its central figure, so frail, so aged, seemed a living proof of the nothingness of human grandeur. Not all the tokens of a nation's love could exempt Victoria from the common lot, and the eternal silence of Frogmore must soon succeed the acclamation of millions.

<sup>1</sup> "The Heart of Asia." London: Methuen, 1899.



Throughout these memorable rejoicings Hunter never slackened his efforts to achieve the work which was to place a seal on his reputation as a man of letters. The framework of the "History of British India" was already fashioned, and on 10th June he described it in elaborate detail to Mr. A. P. Watt. He had grasped the fact that the roots of our Empire in the East are to be found in the struggle for the sea-borne trade of "Ormuz and of Ind," upon which the maritime peoples of Europe embarked when the triumph of Islam closed the old caravan roads through Central and Eastern Asia. That struggle began with the discovery of the Cape route by the Portuguese navigators. One point, however, seemed to require elucidation. How was it, its historian asked himself, that the puny caravels of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries weathered the billows of the Atlantic and the monsoon-lashed Indian Ocean? He sought an explanation from Mr. Kipling, whose "Captains Courageous" proved him to be a past-master in the art of sailing small vessels.

TO MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.

November 11, 1897.

We have just finished reading aloud your "Captains Courageous." I think few will do so without their eyes watering more than once, and I feel sure that neither boy nor man will come to the end of the book without being the better for it. The world is the richer for ever by a marvel of genuine pathos and original work. But I do not write to praise your book; merely to ask leave to make use of two passages in it with reference to the early English voyages of the sixteenth century in small craft. You make me realise, as Hakluyt has never done, how such boats bore the waves of the Atlantic, and were handled by crews of half a dozen to a couple of dozen men. I enclose copies of the excerpts which I have made,<sup>1</sup> and only venture to ask two questions:—

(1) What is the size of the *We're Here*; her tonnage, length, and breadth of beam?

(2) Do the passages really represent what you have seen in the behaviour of a schooner of this size, or are they the creation of your own brain?

If they describe the actual handling and behaviour of the schooner, they throw valuable light on the achievements of English seamen from Cabot's expedition in 1497 down to the establishment

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 136 and 175-176, edition of 1897.



of the East India Company in 1600. Thanks to you, the "History of British India" has now gone, through Mr. Watt, into the printer's hands.

Mr. Kipling's explanation was convincing. He wrote:—

November 11, 1897.

Nothing is more striking to a landsman than the practised evasion of a small craft through the waters. When Solomon wrote "the way of a ship on the sea," he was not thinking of anything bigger than a few score tons. A big steamer simply crushes through the waves, but a small craft, *helped by the helm*, cheats; moreover, the wave that would sweep a big ship clear simply lifts the lesser craft like a cork or a chip, and that is why—barring always the risk of a wooden ship being strained by the torsion of the seas—a small craft is safer than one of medium size if she is well handled. *Nota Bene*.—As you of course know, the Banks have been used for a fishing ground by craft of all makes for a good three hundred years. I took my details from the life. They were almost at my door during the time I lived in America. I am delighted to hear the "History" is in the printer's hands.

It was the Portuguese who showed us the path to India, for the Empire owes its brightest jewel to the daring of Prince Henry the Navigator and Vasco da Gama. Thus a vast mass of material illustrating the early history of the struggle for sea power in Eastern waters lies hid in Portuguese archives. As Hunter determined to study only original authorities, he set sail for Lisbon on 14th December. He spent a fruitful fortnight there, contriving, however, to season the grave business of his life with the usual amount of pleasure. Some glimpses of existence at this seldom-visited capital are afforded in his home letters.

TO CAMPBELL.

December 21, 1897.

Here there is a large English colony with an affable Ambassador and staff; a fine old chaplain, Canon Pope; and talent enough to take the Theatre dos Condes one evening last week and play the "Private Secretary" to an audience of 1000. But I see most of the Portuguese, and have been introduced to various chiefs of the Administration by Baron Danvers, who has given up his time to taking me about. The forenoons (10-2) and evenings (8-10) I spend at the MS. archives in the Bibliotheca Nacional, where they have assigned a charming room to me. When I have had enough



of the Papal bulls and mediæval maps on which I am working at present, I go on excursions to places of interest, including, of course, the palaces and tree-fern glens of Cintra, with its wonderful woods of camellias in full bloom, giant magnolias, evergreen oaks, cork trees, and eucalyptus which are now dropping their barks. To-morrow the Vicomte Castillian takes charge of me, and promises to show rare and marvellous things in the way of Moorish castles and rich Gothic work. The event of the week has been the arrival of Mousinho d'Albuquerque, the Viceroy of Mozambique. It was like a bit of the Middle Ages. The whole garrison of the capital turned out, and the people lined the streets. The King received him at the landing-place with the chief officers of state. Then the horse, foot, marines and the municipal guard formed a long procession with bands of music, in the middle of which the returned Viceroy rode with the King's brother, the General, and the civic dignitaries mounted on barbs on either side. Daily festivities followed, ending with a High Mass of welcome on Friday in the Cathedral, which was attended by the King, Court, and Ambassadors; finally a State banquet at the palace last night. We may think these things exaggerated, but they keep alive the sense of national importance when the reality has disappeared. The Republican element is strong, and the Conservatives are struggling against the tide. At present there is a constitutional king, but he exists only by the precarious balance of parties. Vicomte Castillian, an old-world statesman, said to me the other day, "*I read the Portuguese newspapers? Never! They are merely noise in print.*" The duties on foreign articles are almost prohibitive. I am told that the Government "encourages" the Portuguese language by charging double customs on books in any other tongue!

TO LADY HUNTER.

*December 27, 1897.*

On Christmas Day I dined with Sir Hugh and Lady MacDonell at the British Legation. We were indeed a merry party. After dinner the Ambassador played whist, and the rest of us a shrieking game in which we sat in a circle holding a sheet just above our laps so that it made a low table between us. On this was placed a feather, which we blew from side to side to prevent its capture by the player who stood out. When he contrived to seize it the player nearest whom he stood took his place. Every now and then the man who was "out" overbalanced himself in a forward dash to catch the feather, and fell into the sheet amid Homeric laughter.

Hunter returned to Oaken Holt on 5th January 1898, after a voyage in which the Bay of Biscay showed its most sullen mood. That he left the pleasantest impression behind



him is shown in a letter received after his return from our Ambassador in acknowledgment of one of those little gifts with which Hunter always requited kindness.

FROM SIR HUGH MACDONELL.

*January 15, 1898.*

I hope you are not offended by my apparent remissness in answering your kind souvenir as embodied in "The Thackerays in India," which I received a few days ago. Though touched at this sign that you had not forgotten your far-off friends in the land "in which it always seemed afternoon," I thought it my duty to read the book and not to reply by the stock formula: "I look forward with much pleasure to reading," &c. So I did read, and, though my opinion is of no weight nor my judgment likely to disturb your tranquillity, allow me to say that it pleased me immensely. First, because out of a valley of dry bones you had made a graceful reliquary, and then that it was like yourself. 'Tis a rare thing, an author who resembles his book. Life in this "sleepy hollow" has not altered much since you left, and nothing short of another earthquake will wake us up.

After disposing of the vast accumulation of letters which awaited his return from Portugal, Hunter made, for a Calcutta publisher, a selection of studies in Indian history intended for college use.<sup>1</sup> Then he turned his attention to two supplementary volumes of the "Rulers of India," projected by the delegates of the Clarendon Press. The life of Babar, who founded the Mughal Dynasty, was entrusted to Colonel G. B. Malleson, and on his lamented death in March 1898 it passed into the hands of Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole. General MacLeod Innes undertook a biography of Sir Henry Lawrence, who will be longer remembered as a pure-hearted philanthropist than as an administrator. Hunter's duties as editor of this work were unusually heavy, but they were not permitted to delay the steady progress of the "History of British India." The mornings at Oaken Holt were given up to research, conducted with the aid of Mr. P. E. Roberts, while materials poured in from assistants employed in the British Museum and India Office at the Hague and Lisbon. The expense involved was heavy, and it was very far from being covered by a subsidy of £200 per volume vouchsafed by the Secretary of State for India, for

<sup>1</sup> "Readings in Indian History," 4 vols. Calcutta: Lahiri & Co., 1898.



whose approval Hunter was able to submit the proofs of his first nine chapters at the beginning of April. Greater liberality was shown by two Indian magnates, who knew that he was actuated by no hope of gain in becoming the annalist of their country. H.H. the Thakur of Gondal and the late Maharaja of Darbhanga each contributed nobly to this national work, and their public spirit is a much-needed example for a country which does little in comparison with its means for the encouragement of historical research.

Amid these absorbing duties the weekly articles on "Indian Affairs" were a greater tax than ever on Hunter's powers for sustained effort. But there was no falling-off in quality or interest. Those on Indian currency form a notable contribution to the literature which has grown out of the progressive decline in the rupee value. Their high authority was due to his practice of consulting experts on all technical matters which exercised his pen. The following letter from a pioneer in the Indian jute industry shows the influence which they exerted:—

From MR. W. BIRKMYRE.

July 14, 1898.

You are one of the few officials who clearly understand that the security and power of India depend largely on the development of her almost boundless latent resources. What is more, your methods would do credit to the genius of Adam Smith. The article which you send me has my unqualified approval; you touch first principles in every line of it, and I am unable to make a single suggestion. The principles you lay down have a universal application to commerce. If our rulers wish a coin which is intrinsically worth tenpence-halfpenny to pass current at sixteen pence, the cost must be borne by the State in some form.

Another burning question of the day arose from the warfare which raged throughout 1897 on India's north-western frontier. Hunter's treatment of these convulsions was, in great measure, inspired by one who knew the debatable land between India and Afghanistan as no man living knew it. Sir R. Warburton was loved and respected by the brave highlanders inhabiting it, and but for his retirement under the ruthless superannuation rule, the Indian Exchequer would have been the richer by



several millions, and our army would have been spared some loss of prestige. He wrote :—

FROM SIR ROBERT WARBURTON.

*August 6, 1898.*

A thorough understanding with the trans-border tribes, and a closer association with them on the part of our European officers, are certain to create a better feeling than now exists between us. If the hostilities which now occur almost yearly are checked even for a decade, the revenues of India will gain enormously. My great fear is that Parliament will break up in a few days' time, and before it reassembles a new Viceroy will be on his way out with no decided views on frontier policy. The old muddle will thus continue till a fresh war breaks out to alarm the British public. Then, after a ten days' grumble, we shall subside into our usual course of doing nothing and changing nothing.

Happily for peace in our Indian borders, poor Warburton's forebodings were not realised. Lord Curzon of Kedleston, who was named as Viceroy in August 1898, has shown his usual vigour in dealing with the troublesome legacy bequeathed by his predecessors. In the Frontier Province, which will soon become an accomplished fact, we have the surest guarantee that things will not be permitted to "slide along in the old Punjab groove."<sup>1</sup> A firm yet sympathetic government by men specially versed in the character of these brave savages will replace the ignorant meddling with tribal affairs, the panics, raids, and reprisals which periodically deluge their valleys with blood and cover them with ruined homesteads.

There are few spots on the British coast which Hunter's energy left unexplored. The Isle of Man was amongst them, and in August he visited it with his wife. We met them at Ramsey, a watering-place as yet unspoiled by the annual invasion of the great unwashed from the northern counties. According to his wont, he studied every book which was likely to add to his appreciation of local colouring. Hall Caine's "Manxman" was read aloud as he lay in the enamelled meads of Maughold Head, and "Peveril of the Peak" was enjoyed on the battlements of Lord Derby's erstwhile palace in Peel Castle. During the unforgettable days spent in his joyous company,

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Sir Robert Warburton to Sir W. Hunter, dated 28th September 1898.



my wife and I had experience of his coolness at a moment of pressing danger. On 20th August he took us on a cruise to fish for mackerel in Ramsey Bay. A gale was raging, but Hunter's spirits seemed to rise as we dashed through the waves. At last the little craft was thrown on her beam ends by a furious blast, and, but for his skill and courage, we might well have shared the fate of another pleasure craft which sank with heavy loss of life a few miles away. At the end of the month Hunter left Ramsey for the coast of Arran, and spent some days at Lamlash, revisiting the scenes of many a holiday during his childhood. He took an interest in the people's lives, which are a sealed book to the common run of tourists. On Sunday he attended service, and heard "Lead, kindly light," sung fervently, while the preacher gave the time with his forefinger. On the morrow he called on the minister, who convinced him that young Arran showed the same tendency to despise its paternal calling as is seen by the rural districts on the mainland. The boys, he learnt, all betook themselves to Clyde engineering works. None of the local artificers had an apprenticeship, nor was there a single lad growing up as a fisherman or a farm labourer.

On his homeward journey he halted for a night at Glasgow to muse on the site of his old University, now covered by a goods' station, and Cross Bank, the home of his early days, which was also quite obliterated.

On 7th September the family circle was broken by Mr. Campbell Hunter's departure for the great oil city on the Caspian Sea, where he had obtained the post of superintending engineer to the Baku Russian Petroleum Company.

On the 18th Hunter was present, with a foreboding which was almost realised, at the unveiling of an exquisite Gothic canopy-tomb erected in the parish to the memory of his children who had died in foreign lands; for, a few weeks later, came the news that the young engineer had been struck down by typhoid fever. His parents were not long in forming a resolution to go thither in order to nurse him, although the sudden departure was likely to delay the issue of the first volume of the "History," which awaited only the final revise. While working with Mr. Roberts in desperate haste to prepare his



bantling for the press, he wrote to Mr. Walter Lawrence touching his acceptance of the post of private secretary to Lord Curzon of Kedleston. Both were Balliol men, and Hunter's pride in the college of his adoption was gratified by their appointment to high office in India. Mr. Lawrence replied:—

I rather hoped that I should have your approval, and your letter has done me much good. It was all the kinder and the more appreciated because it was written in your anxiety, which I trust and pray may be lessened by every telegram from Baku.

On 3rd November he dined at the Balliol high table with the Viceroy-elect, and instructed Messrs. Longman to send him a bound copy of the proofs of his first volume for perusal during the voyage to India. On the 7th the Hunters set forth on their toilsome journey. Encouraging telegrams as to the invalid's progress were received at Berlin, Odessa, and Batoum, and, arriving at his bedside, they rejoiced to find him mending slowly.

Baku exhibits, more vividly than any other spot on the confines of Asia, the cleavage-line between the changeless East and the keen industrial life which is transforming the whole fabric of civilisation. There stands the ancient Persian city, hemmed in by crenelated walls, where the *muezzin* still summons the faithful to prayer, and solemn shopkeepers bask in their tiny warehouses, indifferent to the customer's approach. A few hundred yards away is the mushroom petroleum centre, overhung with a dense canopy of smoke, and fringed by a forest of derricks. Its streets are thronged by a motley host attracted by the thirst for gold. The Armenian, versed in guile, the uncouth Tartar, the Russian official and the alert English engineer jostle each other, and fortunes are made and lost in a few hours. One element which was seen at Baku exists there no longer. For long years before the commercial value of petroleum was known, its indications were believed by Hindus to betoken the presence of the Goddess of Destruction. The smoke and flame vomited from Nature's workshop attracted thousands of Indian pilgrims until their beliefs were shattered by inexorable materialism. Hunter's memoranda shows how deeply he was impressed by the sharp contrasts presented by Baku:—



20th November.—Sir James Kitson and Mr. H. N. Gladstone, who are staying here, took me to the Fire Temple at Balakhana, dedicated to Jwala Mukhi. It is surrounded with cells for pilgrims, and shows Siva's trident and the elephant-headed Ganapati.

For seven weeks the parents tenderly nursed their boy, whose state showed the fluctuations generally seen in typhoid fever. And, as if the harassed author had not enough on his hands, he was sorely vexed by the detention of his books and proof sheets on the frontier, which delayed the publication of the History. It was at this time of manifold anxiety that he put forth his greatest literary effort. "Working at my Introduction," he wrote on 2nd December, "but with a heavy heart." At length the malady took a favourable turn. On 17th December he "started for Tiflis after a delightful morning with Campbell, who is much better."<sup>1</sup> Here the noble Introduction to the "History of British India" received its final touches:—

I write these lines in the capital of the Caucasus, an old-world meeting-place of the East and West. Now, as in the time of Strabo, the commerce of the Caspian ascends by the valleys of the Kura River, and descends by the gorges of the Phasis to the Black Sea. But the poled boat and the camel have given place to the iron line. . . . Tiflis, the mediæval mart of this ancient route, now stands as the type of the new railway power by which Russia in the twentieth century will weld together North Europe and Asia from the Baltic to the Pacific, as England won the richest realms of Southern Asia in the eighteenth century by sea-control.<sup>2</sup>

The ethnological marvels seen at Tiflis stirred him deeply. In the rugged Caucasus a halt was called ages ago by the nomad hordes moving westward. The streets offer a kaleidoscopic view of outlandish human types, and it is said that more than a hundred dialects are spoken there.

After four days in this paradise of the philologist and curio-seeker, Hunter returned to the convalescent's bedside and spent the rest of the year in nursing him. On 1st January 1899 a letter was despatched in a more cheerful strain to Mr. Rudyard Kipling:—

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<sup>1</sup> Diary of 13th December 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to Vol. I. "History of British India," p. 15.

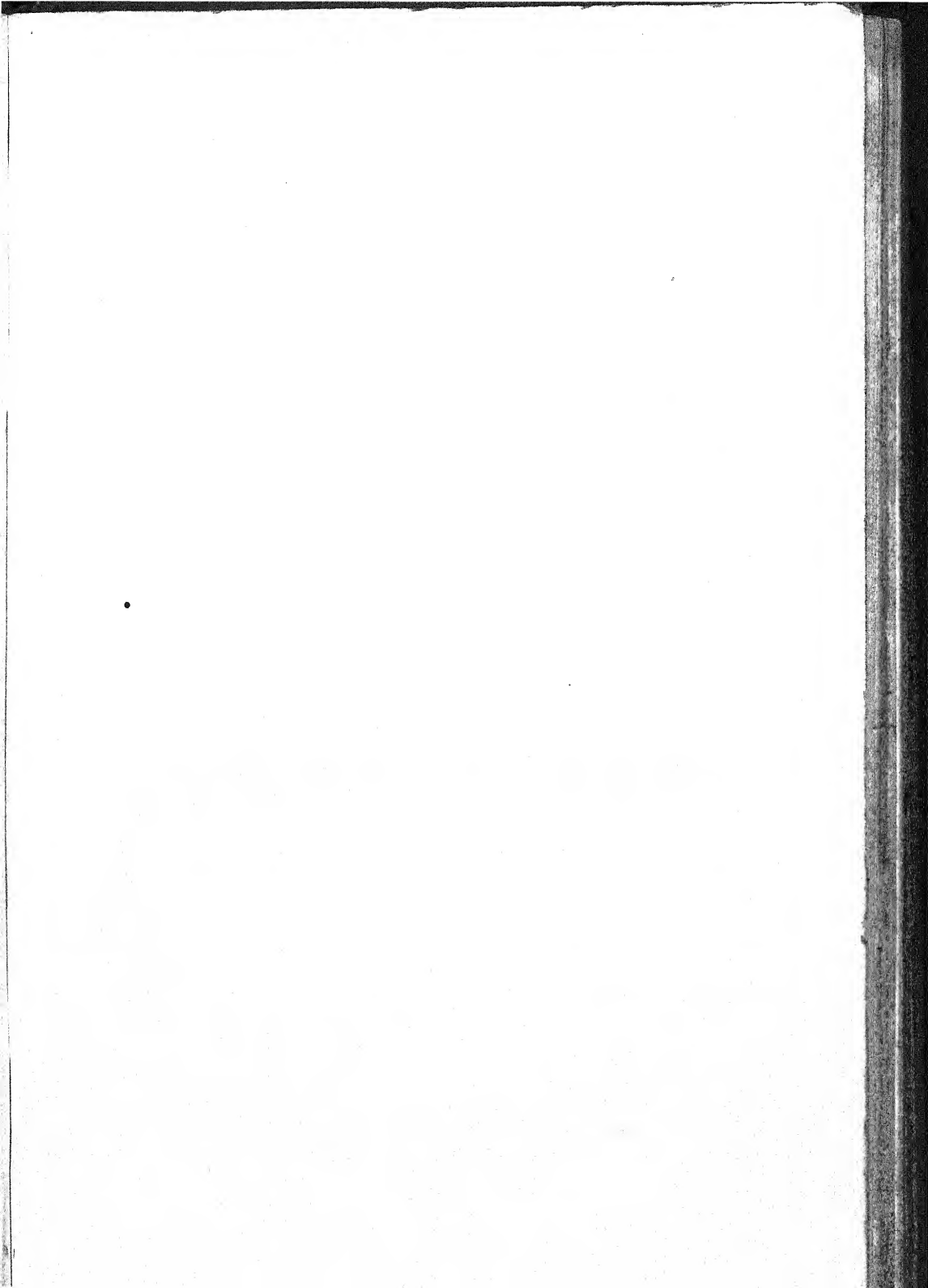


TO MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.

I have been thinking often of you since we arrived at Baku six weeks ago, and of the romance which you could weave out of its marvellous combination of the East and West. Here one realises the life led by the servants of the East India Company two hundred years ago. Baku is a curious jumble of a Tartar settlement, a Persian bazaar, and a handsome Russian port. The few English exiles are almost as dependent on the subtle Armenian as the English were on the Indian banian; and the Armenian, as seen here, is a very poor imitation of the Bengali Babu. There is the same jealousy between the three or four great English concerns that divided the East India Companies and the various interlopers at Hugli or Surat. In giving our farewell parties to the little knot of Englishmen, we had to separate them into still smaller groups, and always be on the look-out for mutual animosities. The very follies and outrageous spirits of the young Briton are the same at Baku, with its 150,000 inhabitants, as they were in *Writer's Buildings*, Calcutta, a hundred years ago. We saw a pair of them racing their camels in the crowded streets, and a British greenhorn point a pistol at an hotel waiter because he could not understand what the trembling creature said. . . . What would not you make of it all? The blue sea stretching under dazzling sunshine to its islands and promontories, the Caucasus rising behind the town, and the deserts on either side bristling with derricks which look like a great fleet of fishing-boats with tan sails. Sometimes a naphtha well spouts forty feet high, throwing up great stones; at places the gas issues in volumes from the ground, and is used for driving machinery and burning lime, and it is a favourite amusement to go out in a boat after dinner and set the Caspian on fire. If ever you want a new field of observation, come here.

On 7th January the invalid, restored to comparative health by his parents' care, was able to return with them to London, the journey being made in easy stages by way of the Black Sea and Mediterranean.









*Hamo Thorneycroft, R.A., sc.*

SIR W. W. HUNTER



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA

THE first of the five volumes in which Hunter proposed relating the rise of British dominion in India was published two months after his return from Baku.<sup>1</sup> It was a necessary complement of the "Imperial Gazetteer." In conducting the survey on which that work was based, he found that fourteen volumes afforded space for a portion only of its results. Thus topography and statistics were exclusively dealt with, and documents which served to illustrate the past of India were stored up for future use. Now gazetteers, like encyclopædias, belong of their very nature to the "Literature of Knowledge." Their value is ephemeral, for sooner or later they are superseded by works which embody the conclusions of later inquiry. A great history, on the other hand, is essentially a part of the "Literature of Power." English and German criticism has demolished a host of the minor details on which Gibbon's stately periods are based, and his Voltairean philosophy is wholly obsolete. But the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" is still regarded as the last word on a catastrophe which changed the entire current of our civilisation. Hunter resolved that his "History of India" should belong to the same category. For nearly a quarter of a century he steadily kept in view the self-imposed duty of describing the growth of religion, and tracing the march of events in India from the earliest times. This far-reaching design was baffled by the shipwreck of the *Nepal* in 1890, which led to the loss of a vast accumulation of original documents bearing on the earlier periods. But, instead of giving way to despair, he reduced his canvas and laboured for ten years to depict the origin of the last and greatest of Indian Empires.

<sup>1</sup> "A History of British India. Vol. i. To the overthrow of the English in the Spice Archipelago." London: Longmans & Co., 1899.



The main idea underlying the work which he was fated to leave unfinished was that the British overlordship in the East is neither an accident nor a phenomenon, but the logical outcome of the laws of evolution which govern human society as they control the workings of nature. It resembles the coral growths of the South Pacific, which stand clothed in tropical foliage high above the ocean wave; for its foundations were blindly laid by myriads of forgotten toilers eager to share in the commerce of the East. "In one sense," Hunter wrote:—

England is the residuary legatee of an inheritance painfully amassed by Europe in Asia during the past four centuries. In that long labour, now one Christian nation, then another, came to the front; but their progress, as a whole, was continuous. It formed the sequel to the immemorial conflict between the East and the West, which dyed red the waves of Salamis and brought Zenobia a captive to Rome. During each successive period, the struggle reflected the spirit of the times; military and territorial in the ancient world; military and religious in the middle ages; military and mercantile in the New Europe which then awoke; developing into the military, commercial, and political combinations of the complex modern world.<sup>1</sup>

The opening volume relates the earlier phases of the conflict. The curtain rises on the jealous Moslem in full possession of the ancient paths of Indo-European trade. The first act shows the "little hero-nation Portugal" seizing the ocean highway round Africa; and the second depicts the struggle between Protestant and Catholic Europe for the position then won by Christendom in Eastern waters. From that battle of the nations Great Britain emerged triumphant; the unquestioned mistress of the realms of Akbar and Aurangzib. The inference established was that modern India is not, as had been assumed, an excrescence on the framework of the British Empire. Its roots are deep in the marrow of our national existence; its progress reflects every phase of our history. The story of its growth—

Stands out as the epic of the British nation—the fibre of its fibre, the express image of its inmost character, of its capacity for external growth and continuous self-rule. It is an epic dealing with far greater achievements and covering a more eventful period

<sup>1</sup> Introduction, p. 2.



than the "Lusiad." It will make the world understand the British race—adventurous, masterful, patient in defeat and persistent in executing its designs.<sup>1</sup>

This discovery gives the people of Great Britain a deeper interest in the well-being of their fellow-subjects beyond the seas. Nor are they alone concerned in the view of Indian history so convincingly stated. The concluding paragraphs of the introduction appeal to the kindred people of the West.

The United States, in the government of their dependencies, will represent the political conscience of the nineteenth century. I hail their advent in the East as a new power for good, not alone for the island races who come under their care, but also in that great settlement of European spheres of influence in Asia which, if we could see aright, forms a world-problem of to-day.<sup>2</sup>

It was, therefore, meet that the first complete copy which reached the author's hands should be transmitted to the newly appointed American ambassador, and his acknowledgment of the gift showed that he realised the vast importance of the theme for every citizen of the United States.<sup>3</sup> It is pleasant to think that the historian's last work was the medium of a message of peace and good-will to a nation which is now linked to us by ties of blood and of common responsibilities. The friends who were similarly privileged were unanimous in their applause, and Sir Alfred Lyall's view was as sweeping as the historian's. He wrote:—

*March 8, 1897.*

The history of the earlier contest among the Western nations for a foothold in India is the prelude to the long series of events which is likely, in the twentieth century, to culminate in establishing the complete political predominance of Europe over Asia—a magnificent theme for the philosophic historian now and hereafter.

Sir George Birdwood alluded to the influence exercised on Hunter's treatment by Captain Mahan's great work on "Sea Power;" but he added:—

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mr. A. P. Watt, dated 10th June 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction, p. 15. The United States were about to assume the government of the Philippine Islands, the spoils of the war with Spain.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Hunter to H. E. Joseph E. Choate, dated 1st March 1897, and the Ambassador's reply of the following day.



*February 13, 1899.*

You have done even more than Mahan; for our empire does not rest on sea-power alone, but on our commerce, which the East India Company first made world-wide.

The reply made by Hunter to his friend and counsellor reminds one of Horace's noble confidence in the verdict of posterity:—

TO SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD.

*March 6, 1899.*

I have done a good piece of work in the History, and I know it. So let the world wag. Whatever the reviewers may say or not say about it now, those who really wish to learn the facts about India will find them there and there alone.

The critics' opinion was that of the friends who had watched the birth of his last and greatest effort. No book of the year had so immediate and unqualified a success. It was admitted on every side that the initial volume was a fitting inauguration of a History of India told with all the lights of science and undisfigured by the prejudice and ignorance shown by earlier workers in the same field.

While his well-deserved triumph was at its height, Hunter fell a victim to the epidemic of influenza which caused so grievous a mortality in April 1899. He would have done well to accept these repeated attacks as a monition that his nerve-force was overtaking his slender reserve of physical strength. But repose was as impossible to him as to the painter Haydon, who used to say that, after resting for a moment, he started up as though he heard Time's eternal waterfall tumbling into the gulf below. So overpowering was his eagerness to complete the labour of his life, that he began the second volume of the History while the weakness and depression brought by influenza were upon him, and before the first had reached the readers' hands. It embraced the period between the Massacre of Amboyna, which planted the seeds of two centuries' hatred between ourselves and the Dutch, and the union of the rival British agencies which started the East India Company on its career of involuntary conquest. Incredible were the pains taken by Hunter to collate the results of his assistants' inquiries in the archives of London, Lisbon, and the Hague. His quest



of the Charter granted by the Protector to the Company in 1657 would furnish an entertaining chapter in a new "Curiosities of Literature." The missing document was pursued from the India Office to the British Museum and Lansdowne House, thence to the Hague and Batavia; and the historian did not relax his efforts until they demonstrated that it had been destroyed at the Restoration. The human types which came to the surface in the troubled waters of the seventeenth century were painted with a care as minute as ever Meissonnier lavished on his tiny canvases. Thus, by lengthening the hours devoted to literature, Hunter lived to complete 323 pages of the second volume ere his busy brain was stilled by death.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the exhaustion of repeated illnesses and the heavy calls of journalism and History, he was as ready as ever to increase the pleasure of his friends. In April 1899 my wife and I spent some enchanting days at Oaken Holt, and joined a merry party, conducted by our hosts, to the annual Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon. On reaching the shrine of countless pilgrims, we took boat on the river and floated past the church, drinking in the sweet rural scene on which the poet's eyes so often rested. Then we adjourned to the Memorial Theatre for the seldom-acted Second Part of Henry VI. How keenly Hunter enjoyed the efforts of the company! How gaily did he laugh at the devices forced upon the much-tried manager by a dearth of properties and scenery! Of him it could not be said that he took his pleasures sadly. He loved bright colours, the company of young men and maidens, and the joyous spirits bred of ignorance of life's trials. "I remember," writes one who knew him in early manhood—

Watching with the deepest interest the various sides of his character as revealed in the course of the day. In the morning he was the absorbed author, at lunch he began to relax. During the afternoon walk or drive, one saw in him the lover of Nature. Before dinner he was a child with his children; then, and in the evening, he was the brilliant talker. Indeed, his talk quite spoiled one for other people's. It was not only what he said, but the

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<sup>1</sup> He left the first seven chapters of volume ii. in proof and an eighth in MS. The concluding chapter was written by Mr. P. E. Roberts, who is now engaged in completing the task set himself by Hunter.



subtle intonation of his voice and the gestures of the artistic hand which accompanied his words and added to their effect.<sup>1</sup>

The same note runs through some reminiscences of Hunter's later life, for which I am indebted to Mr. J. A. R. Marriott, of New College, Oxford.

I gladly comply with the request that I should jot down, roughly and without formality, some reminiscent notice of my much lamented friend, Sir William Hunter. I ought to add that my acquaintance with him extended only over the last eight or ten years of his life, but acquaintance once begun, ripened rapidly into friendship, and that friendship became, I am thankful and glad to think, increased in intimacy until the day of his death. I wish it were within the power of any words I can command to reproduce for others the impression which his home life has left upon me. At Oaken Holt he and Lady Hunter welcomed friends from far and near with the most genial cordiality. On Sundays, in particular, it was their wont to keep open house, and there are many who look back with regretful pleasure to the days thus spent. I could not at times resist the feeling that those Sundays must have put undue strain upon a man who had already done a month's work in the preceding week. But there was never any symptom of weariness on his part. Even had he felt it he would never have shown it, for Hunter was an exemplary and most punctilious host, extending the same kindly and warm-hearted welcome to guests of every age and every degree. He brought men of all sorts under his hospitable roof—famous soldiers, great administrators, men of letters, Oxford dons, callow freshmen, and for all, as I have said, there was the same warm welcome—to all he would give unsparingly of his best intellectual self. Again and again it has amazed me to see how he would exert himself for the amusement and delectation of entirely undistinguished, though rarely unresponsive guests, bringing forth from his abundant stores things new and old. He was an admirable talker, never monopolising or forcing the conversation, never trivial, yet never pedantic or dull. When his talk was of persons it was always good-natured. Of the good work done by others he was invariably appreciative, and I never heard a malicious story from his lips. Perhaps the secret of his social gift (and I suspect that it had a very great deal to do with his literary success also) was his rare sympathy, and his uncommon power of placing himself at the point of view of other people, however far removed from himself in political, religious, or social outlook. It was this, I am certain, which made him such an admirable biographer. The little volume on Lord Dalhousie, in particular, has always seemed to me a masterpiece in miniature.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Miss M. Rowatt of Edinburgh to Lady Hunter, dated 21st June 1900.



But I wander away from the home life at Oaken Holt. One thing which used to delight me there, when the circle after dinner was a small one, was to hear Hunter read, especially when he picked up Sir Alfred Lyall's poems or one of Thackeray's ballads. Among men of letters Thackeray was, I think, his prime hero. The little volume on "*The Thackerays in India*" contains some of the most charming work that ever proceeded from his fertile pen. I don't envy the man who can read its concluding pages without a lump in his throat. Sometimes I have thought that there was not a little in common between the great novelist's nature and his his own. One thing they assuredly had in common—extraordinary and exquisite tenderness towards children. There was nothing which was more certain to arouse Hunter's indignant eloquence than any story, not merely of cruelty or harshness towards children, but any undue assumption of authority on the part of parents, any curtailment of legitimate pleasures, or any wanton warping of individual tastes. To see him with children was an education, for to them most of all he revealed his innate simplicity. Those who knew Hunter only in the great world or from his books may be surprised to learn that he was essentially one of the simplest of men. But no one could doubt it who really knew him in his home, or saw him taking his part in the village life of the secluded parish in which his home lay. There he was every one's counsellor and friend—the friend of the parson, who shared his own anti-quarian tastes, the friend of the villagers, the friend, above all, of the children. More than pathetic was the children's grief when Hunter was laid to rest in the peaceful churchyard, and hardly less pathetic was the grief of the venerable Vicar, who declared to me, with tears in his eyes, "I have lost my best friend." It is not, therefore, unfitting that the main material memorial of this remarkable and many-sided man should be raised in the old parish church where he was wont during these years to worship. Some would have preferred to have seen it at Oxford, in London, or at Calcutta. None of these, it may be hoped, will be left without visible memorial of a man who, playing many leading parts, played all so well. But their instinct surely was sound who declared that the first object of the "memorial" should be to enrich and beautify the village church of Cumnor.<sup>1</sup>

Hunter's greatest charm lay, perhaps, in the art with which he concealed his own distinction. The least gifted felt at ease in his presence, and was encouraged to display his own little stock of knowledge. It has been truly said that we are loth

<sup>1</sup> Soon after Hunter's death an influential committee was formed to perpetuate his memory, and a sufficient amount was collected to defray the cost of a painted glass eastern window in Cumnor chancel, besides purchasing replicas of Mr. Hamo Thornycroft's bust in bronze, which will grace the Indian Institute and Lord Curzon's Victoria Memorial Hall in Calcutta.



to admit superiority in others, but, when the concession is once made, we give our hearts without reserve. This was the secret of the deep affection which Hunter inspired in all who knew him really well. The return to the humdrum world after a stay under his roof was as the awakening from a beautiful dream.

In September he was asked by the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford to serve as the University's delegate at the twelfth International Congress of Orientalists which was shortly to be held at Rome. He accepted the mission with alacrity, replying :—

To the REV. T. FOWLER, D.D.

*September 16, 1899.*

I had, much to my regret, to refuse to act as representative of the Royal Asiatic Society at Rome, for I feel that not many years of real working power may be left to me for the completion of my History. But your wish is to me a command. I regard it not only as a duty, but as a privilege to be able in any way, however slight, to show my gratitude to the University which received me so kindly in later life, and among whose members I have found so many friends.

His diary of the last of many visits to the Continent is unusually full, and it shows that he worthily represented his Alma Mater in the assemblage of scholars from all parts of the world.

*29th September.*—Sent off to Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode the proofs of vol. ii. of my History up to page 260. Wrote Indian Affairs for *The Times*, and left Oxford for Dover with Jessie.

*3rd October.*—Arrived at Rome at 11 A.M. Attended the Congress of officials at the University, meeting the President, Count di Gubernatis, and his accomplished daughter, the Contessina.

*5th October.*—At the first sitting of the Congress. I am inscribed as a member of the Third Section, dealing with the Comparative History of Eastern Religions, which unfortunately meets during the same hours as the Sixth or Indian Section, of which I am one of the Presidents.

*7th October.*—Dined with Count di Gubernatis, whose health was proposed in a Sanskrit speech by Mr. Diosy.

*8th October (Sunday).*—To the American Episcopal Church for morning service. Spent the afternoon at St. Peter's, hearing vespers sung with broad effects but without perfect finish.

*9th October.*—I am acting as *Times* correspondent for the Congress, but of course am sending my communications to the office through its representative at Rome, Mr. Steed.



10th October.—Sir Charles Lyall, representing the Government of India, came to lunch. I am arranging with Sir Raymond West and M. Emile Senart of the Institute the Report of Section VI. on the proposed International Society for exploring India.

11th October.—Signor Boni, who is directing the researches in the Forum, took us over all his recent excavations. He showed us a great curiosity—a palimpsest in stone. The Signor is a poet-architect, who is kept awake at night by the teeming discoveries of his brain. I, too, know the insomnia of research.

He returned to Oxford at the end of October, and the rest of the year was devoted to the "History," which progressed as rapidly as the author's punctilious regard for accuracy admitted. But he was never too engrossed in his own designs to disregard the claims of others on his time and purse. In December a blind Bengali poet wrote thus in response to a donation sent him by Hunter, who had read his sad story in a native newspaper:—

From Mr. HEM CHANDRA BANARJI.

*December 20, 1899.*

I cannot sufficiently express to you my gratitude for your generous gift to me, and for the kind and complimentary terms in which you speak of me in your letter to Raja Peary Mohan Mukerji. Most precious do I reckon both gift and letter as coming from a gentleman of your great mental endowments, wide culture, and literary fame, and as marking a generous appreciation of my humble efforts in the field of Bengali poetry. Loss of sight is in itself affliction enough. In my case, unfortunately, it is associated with want of necessary means, and this in the evening of life, when means are most needed. As the poet says, "Sorrow's crown of sorrow is having known better days." Keen is my repentance now that I had not foresight enough in my "better days." I must bear my misfortune with fortitude, and try to do any useful work that may still be in my power to do. As I can no longer write, I do all I can, *i.e.*, put my name on the part of the paper that is pointed out to me.

We were to have spent a week at Oaken Holt in the middle of December, but urgent business at Vienna deprived me of the pleasure of seeing my friend in the sphere where he shone most brightly. My wife, however, spent some days there, and was pained to notice that overwork and sickness had lessened his vitality. He no longer set the pace in cross-country rides, and seemed to have suddenly grown older. The calamities under



which India was groaning weighed down his spirits, and those of the campaign in South Africa left yet deeper mark. England had no son more devoted to her than Hunter; none prouder than he of the Empire's might and glory. The train of reverses which made the Christmastide of 1899 the saddest in our annals had their share in hastening his end. But, according to his wont, he resolutely put bad news and gloomy thoughts aside, and strove to maintain a bold front to his friends and the world. Once only did passionate feeling betray itself. It was on that awful day when the news of Magersfontein brought woe to so many Scottish households. He started up when the despatches were read to him, and, after one or two of those quick turns which he always took at a time of great emotion, exclaimed, "There's only one man who can save England, and that is Lord Roberts! If jealousy keeps him from the helm, the public will demand him, and *The Times* will give the lead!" History tells how the forecast was fulfilled and the tide of disaster was stemmed by the advent of the Man, without whom legions are of small avail.<sup>1</sup>

The approach of winter opened his heart to the wants of his humbler neighbours at home. On Christmas Day he gave a dinner to the Oxford cabmen, a deserving class who suffer severely during the inordinately long vacations. A recrudescence of influenza deprived him of the pleasure of sharing his guests' enjoyment of the treat, which is still gratefully remembered.

While striving to unravel the tangled thread of seventeenth century history, Hunter reflected that the other great branch of his life's work stood in need of revision. Great administrative changes had taken place in India since the issue of the last edition of the "Imperial Gazetteer." Burma was a province, with a vastly increased area; the Empire's border had been advanced westwards by the annexation of Biluchistan, and the census of 1901 was at hand to render his statistics of population obsolete. On 17th August he had told Mr. Walter Lawrence that he was willing to undertake the issue of a twentieth-century edition of the Gazetteer. On learning that Lord Curzon was strongly in favour of the project,<sup>2</sup> Hunter

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon used to say, "In war, men are nothing, a Man is everything."

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Mr. J. P. Hewitt, Secretary to the Government of India, dated 4th January 1900.



made a collection of the more recent administrative reports, and recast the historical sections with the fuller knowledge gained by his researches. The new duty would involve a tour through Biluchistan and Upper Burma in the winter of 1900-1. He looked forward with delight to revisiting the land which he loved so well. He busied himself with the working plans called for by the Indian Government, and began organising an establishment to aid him in revising the *Gazetteer*. Amid these projects the embellishment of his home was not neglected. A right wing, including an enlarged library, was designed, and contracts were drawn up for executing it. Never were his manifold energies more conspicuous than in the concluding weeks of his life.

On 23rd January the Vicar of Cumnor lunched at Oaken Holt, and found his host in the highest spirits. In the afternoon Hunter rode into Oxford to attend a meeting. Next day he spent the morning in his workroom labouring at the "History of British India," and after writing ten or twelve pages, he did his last piece of literary work. It was a review for *The Times* of Lord Northbrook's "Manual of Devotion for Natives of India." Then, without a moment's rest, he hurried to London on a bitterly cold day to dine with us and meet Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Clemens,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Frankfort Moore, and others. From Paddington he drove to the Piccadilly Club, where he had engaged a bedroom, and joined our dinner-party with his usual punctuality. We saw at once that he was not himself. His features were of an ashen grey, and though his conversation was full of sympathy and life, there were periods of abstraction which we had never seen before. But, despite our uneasiness, we observed with pleasure that the two men who, each in his province, had reached the highest distinction, foregathered at our board, and the impression left on the great American humorist by this glimpse of Hunter did honour to the hearts of both.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The last book which he read was his old favourite, "The Innocents Abroad." It was left on his library table when he started on the ill-fated journey to London.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Clemens told the author that "he was grateful for the opportunity to shake the hand and look into the kind eyes of that great and gifted and noble man." (Letter of 26th February 1900.)



On the morrow Lady Hunter passed through London *en route* for Lamberhurst, the residence of Mr. Matthew Horan. She found her husband ailing, but he assured her that to see her had done him good, and spoke with vivacity of those whom he had met for the first time on the previous evening. They parted without suspecting that death would soon separate them for ever. As the weather was still atrocious, he followed his wife's advice by taking to his bed, whence on 26th January he wrote a few pencilled lines to reassure her, and begged her to "finish her visit comfortably."

But next day the medical man called in found symptoms for which he could not account, and at his suggestion Lady Hunter was sent for by telegram. Dr. W. T. Brooks of Oxford was afterwards summoned, and his intimate knowledge of the patient's constitution led him to divine the cause of his utter prostration. His system, lowered by exhausting labour and repeated attacks of influenza, had proved unequal to the strain placed upon it by a thorough chill contracted during the journey to London. The heart, lungs, and liver were equally affected, and the pulse was low and intermittent. But Hunter's indomitable spirit still asserted itself. On 29th January he listened with pleasure to his last "Indian Affairs" article in *The Times*, and on the 30th Campbell, when summoned to his father's bedside from Cambridge, found him so buoyant that he was unable to realise his grave condition. As Hunter grew weaker, his mind reverted to his much-loved home. Though every possible attention was lavished upon him and his by the staff of the Piccadilly Club, he begged with earnestness to be taken to Oaken Holt. On 2nd February he was tenderly conveyed to Oxford by his wife and son, Dr. Brooks accompanying the little anxious group, and spending the last three nights in the house of death. While driving from the station homewards he whispered that he was too ill to speak, but clasped Lady Hunter's hand in his. When he found himself under his own roof-tree his vitality revived. Glancing upwards at the ceiling of his bedroom, painted with blue sky and fleecy clouds, he murmured, "This is delightful." For the next forty-eight hours the seeming improvement continued, but at noon on Sunday his condition took a turn for the worse. He grew



restless and told Lady Hunter that he felt "very weary," echoing unconsciously the only complaint made by his little daughter on her death-bed. And so the struggle proceeded, the sufferer hourly growing weaker, while those who surrounded his bedside feared that every moment would be the last. His last full day on earth dawned on 6th February 1900. When the post came in he asked for his letters, but was too weak to hear them read. He slept calmly afterwards when oxygen was administered—so calmly that his wife and son, worn out by watching, retired to snatch a few hours' repose. At a quarter past two on the morning of 7th February the nurse summoned them to the bedside. Their dear one was still asleep, but his respiration grew perceptibly fainter, and an hour later his heart ceased to beat.

The news of his death caused sorrow to thousands who knew him only from his books. In his friends it evoked a feeling akin to consternation. They found it impossible to believe that one so full of life and in touch with so many provinces of human interest had been cut off long ere the Psalmist's years were reached. More than one of them remembered Burke's exclamation when he learnt the sudden death of a politician of his day: "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" But deeper feelings welled up when the first shock had spent its force. We recalled his "unfailing courtesy to every rank, his wide sympathies, his readiness to give, his engaging cheerfulness, his compassion for the weak and helpless, his love of children."<sup>1</sup> The union of genius and goodness of heart is rare in

<sup>1</sup> Sermon delivered by the Rev. S. Y. N. Griffith, Vicar of Cumnor, on the Sunday after the funeral. Another tribute came from Mr. B. M. Malabari of Bombay, who wrote to Lady Hunter: "The news of his death was a terrible shock to me. When I read the telegram I was returning home from the Punjab. I had three American tourists as fellow-travellers, who appeared to be gentlemen of culture and sympathy, well versed in our religion and polity. One of them handed me the *Pioneer* casually as the train left Delhi, and called my attention to the news. He remarked the effect it had upon me, and remained silent like his companions until I had recovered sufficiently to explain what a loss I had sustained. They were deeply impressed, and took down the names of Hunter's chief works. When we parted company, the oldest of the travellers asked me courteously who I was. On my replying that it was of no consequence, he said, 'Well, sir, whoever you may be, let me tell you that as long as friendships like yours exist, England has nothing to fear from India.' Hunter's mission as mediator between our Fatherlands survived his death. What more could the greatest and wisest of us desire?"



this self-seeking, struggling world. Those who had been honoured by Hunter's friendship knew that a unique existence had been extinguished, and their sense of bereavement grows as years speed onward. On 10th February he was laid to rest at Cumnor. The gathering at the desolate home reflected its master's many-sided activity. The administration of India, literature, commerce were all represented. Those who loved him flocked on that bitter, wintry day to render the last token of respect to his memory, and he was followed to the grave by the tears and blessings of the poor. He sleeps beneath a stone raised by his widow in the shadow of the little church where he had so often worshipped; and the canopied tomb within, dedicated to his children who had gone before, is inscribed:—

IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER, K.C.S.I.,  
INDIA'S HISTORIAN.  
HIS WORK STILL UNFINISHED,  
AT THE UNEXPECTED CALL OF GOD  
HE RESTED FROM A LIFE OF CEASELESS TOIL,  
FEBRUARY 7, 1900, AGED 59,  
AT OAKEN HOLT IN THIS PARISH.  
HE WAS BURIED NEAR THIS CHURCH  
IN GREAT LOVE AND HONOUR FROM FAR AND NEAR  
AMID MUCH SORROW  
TO AWAIT THE BLESSED REUNION YET TO BE.

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